

Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

4 June 2020

Dear Oliver

Report on the impact of the COVID 19 outbreak on the arts sector in Wales

I attach a copy of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's report on the impact of the COVID 19 outbreak on the arts sector in Wales.

The report reflects the concerns we heard that this pandemic may result in many organisations going out of business and artists and performers losing their livelihoods. I know that the UK Government is working on the immediate challenge of reopening cultural hubs and the longer term challenge of renewing the arts sector once the lockdown is lifted.

I note that you have appointed a Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal, Neil Mendoza, to lead a Cultural Renewal taskforce. Initiatives and guidance agreed at the UK level are likely to have an impact on Welsh venues and businesses. I would be grateful if you could set out how representatives from venues and arts organisations in Wales will be included in this work and that of the Entertainment and Events Working Group.

Wales is heavily reliant on visitors from England to our cultural events. It is vital that Wales is represented in the UK Government's efforts to help get the cultural and creative sectors back up and running. In order to inform our stakeholders of the work in this area, please can you set out how you are working with the Welsh Government and representatives from Wales on these efforts?



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The report makes recommendations on the extension of financial support schemes, and our desire to ensure no artists fall through the gaps in eligibility for them, for this reason I am also writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP.

Many people have contacted me with their concerns about their pressing financial difficulties and I would like to give them assurances that Wales is represented at the UK level of efforts to support our arts. I would therefore be grateful if you could respond at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Mary Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dash at the end.

Helen Mary Jones

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee





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Helen Mary Jones
Chair of Culture, Welsh Language and
Communications Committee
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19 August 2020

Our Ref:
MC2020/08821

Dear Ms Jones,

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 June, to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, enclosing a copy of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's report on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the arts sector in Wales. I am responding as the Minister for Digital and Culture.

I appreciate you sending us this report, which I have shared with officials. I would however, like to reassure you that the government recognises that these are incredibly challenging times for all associated with the arts and culture sector across the whole of the UK. This sector has, to some degree, been hit harder by the impact of lockdown measures than other sectors, and I fully understand your concerns.

As you will know, on 5 July the government announced an unprecedented £1,57 billion financial package to support the sector. Culture and Heritage are at the heart of communities across the country, enriching the lives of millions, and this financial investment is testament to the role this sector plays in our lives. The fund will protect cultural assets of international, national and regional importance, including supporting the levelling up agenda by preventing the loss of valuable cultural fabric from our towns and regions. This fund will support organisations through to the Spring of 2021, and as you will know, Welsh cultural organisations will also benefit from this funding with £59 million being provided to the Welsh Parliament under the Barnett formula. It is of course up to the Welsh Parliament how this money is spent.

DCMS has also been working closely with Arts Council England to monitor and respond to the challenges being faced by the arts and cultural sectors, and Arts Council England's £160 million emergency response package has already helped over 10,000 individuals and organisations. I am aware that the Arts Council of Wales has implemented similar support packages, which is a positive step.

As we ease the lockdown conditions, myself, ministers and officials are continuing to consult the creative and cultural sectors extensively to ensure we fully understand the potential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on the sector. As you may know, the Secretary of State recently revealed a five stage roadmap that the UK Government will work through to get the performing arts sectors back up and running. On 9 July we also published guidance for people who work in performing arts, including arts organisations, venue operators and participants which will help people understand how they can work and take part in the performing arts safely, and keep

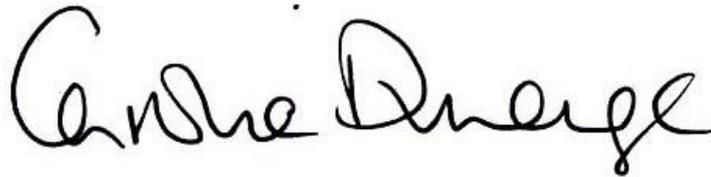


their audiences safe. I understand the Welsh Parliament have also published their guidance too.

While the arts remain a devolved issue, my officials will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations to ensure that our arts and cultural sectors across the country are able to recover successfully from this current crisis.

Thank you once again for writing and I hope this information is useful.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Caroline Dinenage". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture