



Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

**The All Party
Parliamentary
Writers Group**

22 May 2020

Dear Oliver

Re. Proposal to form a 'UK Creators Council' involving DCMS

I hope this letter finds you, your family and colleagues in the Department well in these difficult and distressing times.

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Acting Chair of the All Party Writers Group (APWG) because, as you will be well aware, writers and other members of our creative industries are being financially crippled, like many others, during the current crisis. While Government help so far is very welcome, many creative people in particular may fall through the gaps in support initiatives – such as the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme - because of the diversity of their portfolio careers.

I have taken over as Chair of this Group following John Whittingdale's re-appointment as a DCMS minister. During John's time as Chair, the APWG carried out an inquiry into authors' falling earnings well before our present straits and one of the main recommendations was to establish a 'Creators Council' to listen to them and their representatives directly.

Although the Government has a Creative Industries Council to listen to concerns of industry, namely, there is no parallel round table for creators themselves - without whom the industries would not exist - to have crucial conversations with Government. During our recent DCMS Select Committee, indeed, you stressed efforts the Department was making to reach out to stakeholders in the sector.

I know you have received representations about this more 'holistic approach' already, with the aim of benefitting the policy- and decision-making process. And I also feel that, at this unique moment, such a body would be a huge boost to confidence in the sector and a valuable conduit to channel the concerns of individuals working in our creative industries, through their membership bodies.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this suggestion further, as this crisis continues to unfold, and very much look forward to hearing back from you.

Best regards and yours sincerely

Giles Watling
Member of Parliament for Clacton

The All Party Parliamentary Writers Group

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