

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4362

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

*CC: Justine Simons
Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries*

[By Email]

7th October 2020

Dear Sadiq,

Urgent Support Needed for the Creative Industries in London

I am writing to you to share the deep concerns I have for the creative industries in London.

It is clear that the Government is abandoning the arts and creative sector, a sector which until recently employed a staggering 500,000 people in London.

I am sure you will agree that the suggestion people who have contributed to the previously thriving arts sector in London should simply look for alternative work is both offensive and narrow-minded. In London especially, the diversity and breadth of our arts and creative sector is a source of huge pride to Londoners and is one of many things that helps attract some many tourists to our great city.

The creative industries have already been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. Freelancers account for approximately 72% of the industry, compared with 16% on average across other industries. As a result of this hundreds of thousands of freelancers across the sector in London have already been excluded from Government support during this pandemic. As if this was not enough, we now face the increasing prospect of permanent closures of arts and cultural venues across the capital as our Government encourages, and effectively forces, hard-working, talented and professionally trained individuals to find other work.

I hope you agree that to treat the creative industries in this way is not only unfair, but it is also deeply irresponsible. The way the Government appears to be willing to sacrifice creative industries to Covid-19 will be damaging to all of us in London. But more than this, we must realise that as we come out of this pandemic, which we will, our creative industries and arts sector will play a central role, particularly here in London.

If we allow the sector to be decimated it may never recover – this would be both an economic and social catastrophe for both our city and our country.

I would be grateful if you could outline not only the work you are doing to lobby the Government on behalf of the creative industries in London, but also the specific measures you are looking to take, in addition to those you have already outlined in previous correspondence, if the Government continues to risk the future of our creative industries in London.

The sector needs urgent and radical support, and if the Government is not willing to provide this I hope you will commit to doing all you can to support the sector during through this unprecedented crisis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon AM
Liberal Democrat Assembly Member