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The Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
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Submitted by email and Smart Survey Portal

24 September 2020

Dear Chancellor

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) Submission.

The AOI is a membership organisation founded in 1973 to support and sustain illustrators and the illustration industry. The AOI is based in London, with members across the UK and a small percentage globally. Our membership is 2,800, a significant number for our industry, and we are the representative body for the industry with illustrators, agents and colleges as members.

The majority of illustrators are freelance operating as sole traders or limited companies. Our members work across the creative industries- in publishing, editorial, advertising, gaming, animation, medicine and research etc. They are sought by commissioners in the UK and worldwide and many are recognised as leaders in their field.

We are submitting four proposals for this years' CSR:

1. Targeted financial support for Self Employed Illustrators and Micro Companies
2. Updating Public Lending Rights (PLR)
3. Improving learning resources for University students
4. Supporting vital industry initiatives such as The Society of Authors Emergency Fund

1. Targeted financial Support for Self Employed Illustrators and Micro Companies

The creative and cultural industries are one of the UK's major success stories. They have been growing faster than the national average, and have generated £143 billion of the Gross Value Added (2018), equivalent to 7.5% of the UK economy, as well as offering substantial soft power for decades (and arguably centuries.)

The pandemic has hit these industries particularly hard. The financial impact of Covid for illustrators is significant and stark. In a survey undertaken in May 2020 we evidenced that 73% respondent's income has decreased since the start of the pandemic. The average loss was between £1,000 and £3,000 over two months. Unsurprisingly 97% of respondents are in some way concerned about the impact of Covid-19 on their household finances.

One in three workers in the creative industries is self-employed and many are in micro companies of less than 3 staff. The Government's support packages, while welcome, have not been suitable for an estimated 60% of our membership. The Pandemic has evidenced fragilities that exist within the creative sector, which relies on employing many on short term, freelance and self-employed contracts. We have detailed the gaps in provision in our detailed submissions to the BEIS and DCMS inquiries which you can read [here](#) and [here](#).

Long term support must be provided to enable individuals and micro companies to continue to create the work which the UK is not only proud of, but trades from.

2. Updating Public Lending Rights (PLR)

Public Lending Right is designed to balance the social need for free access to books with an author or illustrator's right to be remunerated for their work. The scheme provides a modest payment (around 9p) each time one of their books is borrowed from a public library. Over 22,000 writers, illustrators, photographers, translators and editors receive PLR payments of up to £6,600 each year.

This is a vital part of many illustrators annual income. PLR was extended to e-lending from 2018 but no additional funding was made available for those loans. Covid-19 has seen an increase in many libraires e-book offer underlining the need for this to be addressed.

At £6million net of admin costs, PLR is less than half the size of its German equivalent and has stayed roughly the same size for many years. There is a strong case to be made to increase the funds and update the scheme.

We are asking, in line with the Society of Authors, for a significant increase in PLR funding; the budget to be ring-fenced as part of the spending review, and PLR to be extended to volunteer libraries, ending the inequity that private lending libraries do not pay for loans.

Implementing these actions would have significant benefit to a wide number of illustrators and creative freelancers.

3. Improving learning resources for University students

Universities are set to loose £19billion in 2020/21 according to research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. It is imperative that Higher Education establishments are able to purchase the necessary resources; digital and print, to enable all students, regardless of their financial background, to continue to work.

We know that the financial barriers to undertaking higher education prohibit diversity in the workforce. The challenges of the pandemic mean this will be more keenly felt and there

must be pro-active support to ensure there is not a legacy of inequality felt for decades within Illustration and the Creative Industries.

4 Supporting vital industry initiatives such as The Society of Authors Emergency Fund

The Government's announcement of the £1.57 billion stimulus for the arts is welcome, as is the financial support offered through the SIESS and other schemes. However, the reality is that many individuals fall outside of these measures, and face a life-changing financial impact due to the pandemic.

The Society of Authors established an Emergency fund, open to authors and illustrators at the start of the pandemic, and have raised over £1million to support those in financial need. This, along with other private initiatives have been a lifeline to many illustrators, who are otherwise ineligible for support. These vital lifelines, delivered on the ground, using the community reach and knowledge must be funded to continue.

I welcome the opportunity to talk further about these or other areas, and work positively for a robust, inspiring industry for us all,

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Ren Renwick
CEO