

Submission: An Equal Recovery

Who we are

The [Creators' Rights Alliance](#) (CRA) is the UK's principal voice for creators. We speak on behalf of 17 member organisations and trade unions representing about 350,000 creators on issues affecting creative professionals – from authors, artists and illustrators to translators, performers, musicians and journalists – on policy issues ranging from fairer contract terms and working conditions to copyright and intellectual property issues.

Our three key messages

1. The UK needs the creative industries:

The creative industries are vital to the UK economy, contributing [£115.9 billion in GVA](#) in 2019 – more than aerospace, automotive, life sciences and the oil and gas sectors combined – and growing five times faster than the economy as a whole.

2. But, they are often exploitative and unfair:

The pandemic has exposed the fragility and unfairness at the heart of the UK's creative industries with too many of its workers on precarious contracts – whether short-term, poorly paid or zero hours – and [nearly half of its workers self-employed \(47%\)](#) compared to 15% across the economy as a whole.

3. And, pandemic support has not reached creators:

Government support for creators has been lacking during the pandemic with the majority of workers ([as much as 86%](#)) reporting that they had not benefitted – or did not expect to benefit – from the Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) with up to [96% and 97% ineligible for furlough and Universal Credit support](#).

Our three key asks

1. Level Up support for creators:

To protect and promote our world-leading creative industries, the Government must step up and offer sector-specific support, not just for cultural institutions, but for the creators who are the lifeblood of the creative industries.

Too many creators have missed out on both furlough and SEISS payments with many having left or being on the brink of leaving their professions altogether. Lack of workers' rights, substantial commercial and equipment overheads, and increasingly precarious working contracts have not helped, but lack of targeted pandemic support has also played a part in loss of UK creative capacity in the last 16 months.

Collectively, these factors call into question whether economic growth at pre-pandemic levels can be sustained across the creative industries as Coronavirus restrictions are carefully lifted. The Government must now ensure that there is specific and targeted support for creators to make the UK a better place in which to be self-employed and redress the fundamental asymmetries of bargaining power that exist between commissioning companies and creative professionals.

2. Enhance diversity and inclusion:

Concerns surrounding diversity and inclusion within the creative industries were commonplace pre-pandemic.

In 2019, roughly half (52%) of those working in creative occupations are from privileged backgrounds, compared to roughly one in six (16%) who were from working-class backgrounds. The 2014 figure for working-class creative professionals, meanwhile, was slightly higher at 18% suggesting that Government and industry initiatives since have failed to improve the diversity of UK creators¹.

Further to this, the **impact of the pandemic has been disproportionately felt by women**. The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee carried out [an inquiry](#) into the gendered economic impact of coronavirus, finding that “existing gendered inequalities in the economy have been ignored and sometimes exacerbated by the pandemic policy response”. Within the creative industries a higher proportion of workers are women, meaning the impact, and financial implications, are widely felt.

Data from the ONS has highlighted that **BAME communities have been most significantly impacted** by COVID 19 in terms of infection and death rates. Recent [research by Inc Arts](#) suggests that the community has also been hit by a disproportionate increase in redundancies and loss of freelance work.

The pandemic has placed particular strain on creators with disabilities, serious health conditions and those in other vulnerable groups (including older workers). Disabled creatives have described how they face ‘long term shielding, a total loss of income, compromised independent living and the risk of invisibility in wider society.’ Disabled artists, employees and audiences must be prioritised and celebrated in both cultural policy and delivery to ensure that we do not lose the progress made in developing an inclusive, thriving industry. See The We Shall Not Be Removed campaign for further [here](#).

To ensure an equal recovery the creative industries must create more diverse work undertaken by a more diverse workforce appealing to people of all backgrounds, both in the UK and beyond. The Government must redouble its efforts to work directly with creators and their industries to develop – and work to – a robust diversity and inclusion strategy to avoid fewer creators from fewer backgrounds working for fewer consumers.

Higher Education Institutions are working hard to address existing structural inequalities and underrepresentation in the creator talent pipeline by providing an important pathway for students from low participation backgrounds to access study and future careers. An equal recovery must incorporate measures within education to improve the diversity rates of those studying to be creators.

3. Establish a Creators Council:

We want to have confidence in the Government’s ongoing policymaking on the creative industries and, to this end, we are publicly backing the [creation of a Creators Council](#) to ensure that collecting societies, trade unions and other member organisations, including the CRA, can regularly meet with Government officials and inform policymaking affecting the creative industries.

¹ For more on these and other statistics, see the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre’s report *Getting in and getting on: Class, participation and job quality in the UK’s Creative Industries* (27 August 2020) [here](#).

A Creators Council would provide a forum for representatives of creators to advise on policymaking in its early stages, share industry best practice and work towards improving diversity and inclusion across the UK's creative workforce, complementing the Creative Industries Council, which consists of the Government meeting regularly with industry bodies.

Given the above considerations and the pronounced disparity in bargaining power between commissioning companies and self-employed creators, now is the time to establish such a council and we would ask that the Treasury Select Committee add its considerable weight to the chorus of support from parliamentary colleagues on the [DCMS Select Committee](#).

Further evidence

The CRA stands ready to assist the Treasury Select Committee with further oral or written evidence. For further information about this submission or to arrange for subsequent evidence to be taken, please contact Public Policy Manager, [Eddie Reeves](#).

Submitted by via the House of Commons portal [here](#).