The Mighty Creatives

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29 September 2020

Dear Rt. Hon. Oliver Dowden M.P. C.B.E.,

**381 SUPPORTERS FROM THE ARTS, EDUCATION, VOLUNTARY, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO PUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF CULTURAL RECOVERY**

We are writing to thank you for your imagination and ambition in supporting the arts and heritage sectors with your recent announcement of the £1.57bn Emergency Support Package. We are convinced that this will make a significant contribution to supporting the arts and heritage sectors at a time when they are most under threat.

We are concerned though that in the forthcoming weeks that in aiming to support our nation’s cultural ‘crown jewels’ there is a risk that the ‘levelling up’ agenda the government has been so vocally advocating since it was elected last year will be forgotten.

Whilst no-one could deny the role that our London organisations have in contributing to the cultural and economic capital of the nation, we are asking you not to forget the power and influence of our region’s cultural organisations: and particularly to remember the positive effects they have on our children and young people, the real ‘Jewels in the Crown’.

As one of the Arts Council England’s Bridge organisations, The Mighty Creatives works hand in hand with our partners – many of whom are signatories to this letter – to transform the lives of children and young people in the region through the power of arts and culture. This has been especially true during these challenging times of Covid-19.

Even before the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, child poverty was rising, school budgets were under pressure, waiting lists for mental health services were unacceptably long, and services supporting families and protecting children from abuse and neglect were at breaking point. We know there is no certainty about when the crisis will end and when we can see loved ones again and we also know there is more financial hardship to come.

But we also know that culture and creativity can play a massive part in contributing to solutions to child poverty by improving personal self-esteem, cultural confidence, educational attainment and economic achievement.

We believe that your Emergency Support Package could be the start of a rescue, recovery and rebuild plan which prioritises, supports and enables our artists to transform the cultural lives of children.

We call on you to support cultural investment in our children and young people by ensuring the Emergency Support Packages supports innovation between artists, educators and young people across the country and is committed to supporting the 1 in 7 children in need across the country: particularly those who have been forgotten and left behind in recent years.

It’s now time for artists’ strengths and abilities in transforming children’s lives to be acknowledged across the country and we urge you to use your power and influence to ensure this vision can be achieved.

Yours sincerely,

****

**Dr. Nick Owen M.B.E. Felicity Woolf**

**CEO, The Mighty Creatives Chair of Trustees, The Mighty Creatives**

**CC Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP**

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