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Dear Ed Davey,

I'm writing on a matter of great urgency and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you as soon as possible. The creative industries can provide vital wealth and job creation, reboot and reconnect our communities, and contribute to positive social outcomes at a time of extreme challenge - in all parts of the UK. But the fallout from the pandemic is hitting the creative industries hard, putting the UK's world-leading creative output and the most vulnerable at risk. New research from Oxford Economics forecasts a combined revenue drop of £74 billion for the UK's creative industries in 2020, with a loss in gross value added (GVA – a measure of output) of 25%, or £29 billion. Over 406,000 (1 in 5) jobs are expected to be lost in the sector by the end of the year, including the termination of 287,000 freelance roles. The majority of the creative industries' economic output loss will be in London, with the consequential loss in jobs for our area.

This has affected me, my colleagues and my business personally. I am the founder of Ward Williams Creatives, business advisor and accountant for the creative industries. I work with many wonderful people and their businesses and it has been disheartening to hear on a daily basis the impact that the pandemic is having. While they continue to put their energies and passion into saving their businesses so much is outside of their control.

I'm joining the Creative Industries Federation and its members in calling for an urgent Cultural Renewal Strategy, to include:

- A Cultural Renewal Fund: A targeted government stimulus package for those who need it most, particularly those unable to operate whilst social distancing is in place. Other countries, including Germany and New Zealand, have already introduced such support.
- The avoidance of a cliff-edge on vital support schemes, including the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme. It is also crucial that the gaps in these schemes are urgently plugged to help freelancers (including individuals working through their own companies) who are struggling to make ends meet. The job losses will disproportionately hit these freelancers traditionally employed in our sector.
- A plan to place the creative industries at heart of socio-economic regeneration: We can build a new future, built on innovation, inclusivity and brilliant ideas. Creativity - and the creative industries - need to be placed at the heart of this.

If nothing is done, thousands of brilliant creative businesses will close, hundreds of thousands of jobs will be lost and billions will be lost to the national and local economy. In all respects we will end up living in a poorer place. We must act now before it is too late to halt the further devastating effects.

I'd welcome your support in advocating these priorities to colleagues and look forward to speaking with you in more detail soon.

Yours sincerely,





Erin Walls

Director & Founder of WardWilliams Creative

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<https://creative.wardwilliams.co.uk/>