



The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

20 May 2020

Dear Gavin,

As Chair of the All-Party Group on Art, Craft and Design in Education, I am writing to ask that you reconsider plans to subject specific courses, including those covering art and design, to funding reductions.

Your proposals to reduce funding by £121.40 per head for courses in price group C1, which further to art and design includes dance, music, drama, media studies and archaeology, will equate to a funding cut of 50 percent in the subsidy to these specialist subjects.

While these courses, being specialist, can be more costly to run than other subject areas, halving the amount spent to fund such courses would be catastrophic and could prove existential for many subject areas.

The consequences of these plans will undoubtedly be wide reaching, as 65% of creative sector employees are educated to degree level. The plans to halve funding of university arts education will adversely affect students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, reserving arts subjects for more affluent students.

The benefits of art education go beyond the culture industry, too, contributing to technological developments ranging from science, healthcare, and engineering to the gaming industry. In developing your Department's strategic priorities we hope that the less obvious successes of arts education are considered.

Modern British culture is something we all depend on in some form or other. The pause to many creative industries across the last year has proved how vital the arts are, being one of the parts of normal life we have missed the most.

The effects of this set of cuts will be devastating, possibly reversing decades of hard work and effort to diversify the creative industries.

The APPG joins the Contemporary Visual Art Network and the many voices from the creative sector, education system and further in urging you to reconsider these plans, to ensure the long-term success of the British creative industries and recognise that art is essential.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hodgson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon Hodgson MP

MP for Washington and Sunderland West

Chair, All-Party Group for Art, Craft and Design in Education