



Department for Culture Media & Sport

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Dear Chi

Thank you for your letter. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I agree that the debate on diversity in Westminster Hall in July was enjoyable. As you know, it is an issue which is close to my heart and which I consider to be of high importance to the industry. I welcome debate that raises the profile and highlights the positive benefits that a diverse culture can bring to the creative industries.

You raised a number of questions in your letter which I'll answer in turn:

“Does he share my concern that the creative industries are missing out on a huge pool of creative and managerial talent?”

Yes, as I made clear in the debate, I share your concerns. I have been acutely aware of the talent that is out there and that is does not always get the opportunities within the industry to show what they can do. This is why I and my Department have been actively encouraging the industry to look at its approaches to diversity, to open up opportunities within the creative industries through holding roundtables, working with the Creative Diversity Network, and encouraging the EHRC to provide guidance to help the industry

“Does he agree that as well as gender and ethnicity, socioeconomic background and region are important”

I think that it is important to consider whether there is equality of opportunity for all groups and that there are no barriers based on gender, ethnicity, socio economic background, sexuality and disability to working and progressing in the creative industries.



You will be interested in my Department's publication *Creative Industries: Focus on Employment*, published in June 2015, looked at the state of employment in the Creative Industries, specifically concentrating on gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic class (as well as geography & qualifications).

“Does he further agree that much more progress must be made in those areas?”

Yes, I agree more progress needs to be made in creating diversity within the creative industries for all groups who are currently under represented. I am encouraged by the way in which all the major broadcasters, along with the Arts Council and the BFI, have launched projects to promote diversity across the board.

“Will he mandate or encourage the collection of data, so that we know the size of the challenge?”

I have encouraged the Media industry to do more to collate robust data on levels of diversity on and off screen. I therefore welcome the Creative Diversity Network's Project Diamond. I have been told that this new system for collecting data will be going live in 2016. This is an ambitious undertaking which aims eventually to be a database capturing diversity data on every single programme that broadcasters make, both on-screen and off-screen. It will eventually measure progress and highlight any areas where work is needed.

I want to continue to push on this agenda and keep the spotlight on diversity as the industry works to improve the levels of diversity in the creative sector. In September I attended the launch of the Creative Industries Federation latest report into diversity: *Creative Diversity The state of diversity in the UK's creative industries, and what we can do about it*.

This report provides a statistical and evidence based look at diversity in the creative industries and makes practical suggestions on steps the industry can take to embed positive diversity policy within creative organisations.

“Is he aware of different initiatives that are being undertaken, and what is his assessment of them?”

I am aware of the initiatives made by BBC, ITV, Sky, Channel 4, BFI and the Arts Council and believe them to be important in shaping the industry's approach and attitude to diversity. I will be looking to them to identify the progress made from their initiatives.

In August, I attended the 2015 Edinburgh TV Festival and took part in an event run by Creative Skillset and saw their existing and planned programme of schemes run in partnership with the industry. I am confident that they will help open up opportunities to more people currently under represented

“Neither Ofcom or the BBC publishes figures on the proportion of funding that goes to independent producers. Will he rectify that?”

The BBC's governing instruments, the Royal Charter and Agreement, place broad obligations on the Corporation in respect of its television and radio services, objectives, programme content and standards. Within this framework detailed decisions are matters for the BBC, reflecting its independence from government. At present the agreement states that the BBC commissioning should be made up of up to 50% in-house production with 25% which must be commissioned from independent producers and 25% which is contestable between in-house and independents. The BBC have indicated a desire to increase outsourced commissioning. As part of the agreement Charter review will have the opportunity to review this.

“What steps will he take to ensure that film and radio are produced independently in the north-east?”

The Government supports the production of TV and film content in the regions through the British Film Commission and Creative England, which provide a comprehensive production liaison service to support the growth and delivery of production across every region of England outside London. This includes promoting locations, crews and infrastructure to domestic and international production companies to encourage production across the regions, including in the North East.

Creative England work closely with the screen agency Northern Film and Media to support filming and encourage a thriving industry in the region. This activity is delivered to support the growth of new indigenous talent, grow regional economies and create jobs. The Government also supports a strong and vibrant radio sector encompassing both commercial and community radio. We also fully recognise the important role that commercial stations play in terms of the provision of national and local news and information and in terms community engagement.

“Does he think that it is possible to get a casting agent to go to a show at a northern state school?”

I promised you in the debate that I would arrange for a casting agent to visit a production at a Northern school and I will endeavour to fulfil that promise. I will write to you again shortly when I've found the agent.

Yours sincerely



Ed Vaizey

Minister of State for Culture and the Digital Economy