



Dear

As one of your constituents, an active member of the professional music sector, and on behalf of over 12,500 of my colleagues who are members of the new (apolitical) Musicians' Movement, I am writing to you in the hope that you will consider asking a parliamentary question for oral answer in the House of Commons at Prime Minister's Questions next Wednesday.

Our group, which represents a cross-section of the music industry, is seeking the immediate replenishment of £64.8 million spent by Arts Council England during the Covid-19 crisis on emergency relief.

I set out below what we would like you to consider:

1. At a time when the UK government was facing the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and an unprecedented number of important, time sensitive issues, Arts Council England has diverted to date £64.8 million of its annual budget into "Emergency Response Funds" to respond to the lockdown measures (1).
2. This was necessary to delay the immediate collapse of the UK arts and culture industry, which contributes billions to our economy each year (2). However, it means that grants normally available for the creation of art, music and drama are no longer available. In particular, the Open-Access National Lottery Project Grants that support grassroots live music across the country have been suspended (3).
3. Without access to these grants, tens of thousands of musicians, actors, dancers, artists, and employees of the wider sector may be forced to abandon their professions or face redundancy, with further damage inflicted on our national culture and economy.
4. The effects of the lockdown have been particularly devastating on the arts and culture sector, much of which has suffered a complete loss of revenue. According to the Music Venue Trust (4), over 400 UK grass-roots venues face imminent closure. Many of the UK's most precious cultural and economic assets are under tremendous pressure, along with professional musicians and other artists across the country. As emergency reserves run out, we risk losing part of our cultural heritage forever (5).

5. Now that lockdown is being eased, the arts and culture sector needs the tools to get us working again. Therefore, I ask whether you would be willing to request that the following question be included on the order paper to be put to the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Questions next Wednesday.

"During the Covid-19 crisis, Arts Council England has been forced to divert £64.8 million in funds to provide short-term emergency relief to support the arts, culture, and creative sectors, which contribute billions to the economy each year. That money is now needed to support longstanding and iconic British arts institutions, the creation of art, music and drama, and thousands of jobs. Will the Prime Minister join me in recognising the importance of the arts to our culture and commit to the immediate replenishment of £64.8 million in funds for Arts Council England?"

Without your support, the arts and culture sector will face a significant funding shortfall. We risk the loss of important institutions, large and small, and pushing thousands of talented artists and musicians away from careers in the arts. That would be an injury to Britain's culture, her economy and her standing as a world leader in the arts.

Will you consider asking this question on my behalf as one of your constituents, and on behalf of the Musician's Movement? I should be grateful if you could respond by email to _____ and musiciansmovementuk@gmail.com.

Yours Sincerely,

Member of the Musicians' Movement.

Sources:

- (1) <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19/data>
- (2) <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/contribution-arts-and-culture-industry-uk-economy-0>
- (3) <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants>
- (4) <http://musicvenuetrust.com/2020/03/grassroots-music-venues-in-crisis-music-venue-trust-call-to-action/> and <https://saveourvenues.co.uk/#/>
- (5) See: <https://www.classicfm.com/artists/royal-opera-house/collapse-in-autumn-needs-theatre-recovery-plan/>;
<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/southbank-centre-risk-closure-coronavirus-loss-a4449931.html>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-52796165>; <https://www.ft.com/content/8c281636-9f41-11ea-b65d-489c67b0d85d>;
and <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/arts-culture-theatre-dance-coronavirus-lockdown-funding-a9575581.html>