



**HOUSE OF LORDS**

**Select Committee on Communications and Digital**

House of Lords

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Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
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1 October 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

I write on behalf of the Communications and Digital Committee following your speech at Exeter College on 29 September. We were encouraged by your commitment to improve alternatives to university degrees and, in particular, to reforming the apprenticeship levy such as by making it work better for SMEs and project-based work.

In our inquiries into the theatre industry, the advertising industry, TV production and journalism we found that the levy is not working for those sectors. Our world-leading creative industries can offer young people highly rewarding jobs which are not at risk of being supplanted by artificial intelligence. However, the apprenticeship levy has so far failed to exploit these opportunities. Its inflexibility has made it difficult for small businesses and businesses running short-term projects to use the scheme. We have recommended that businesses should be able to pool funds through industry training agencies and that, as so much training is 'on the job', they should be able to spend some of the funds on apprentices' wages or other expenses associated with employing them.

We would be grateful for more details on how your proposals will realise the potential of the creative industries to provide high-quality apprenticeships for young people. We would be happy to provide more information on our findings.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Gilbert of Panteg  
Chair of the House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee

CC: Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education