



**Department  
for Culture,  
Media & Sport**

Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP  
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport  
1st Floor  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

E: [enquiries@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@dcms.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/dcms](http://www.gov.uk/dcms)

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Dame Caroline Dinenage MP  
Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Caroline,

**Work of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport: follow-up**

Thank you for your letter of 22 September following my session with the Committee on 10 September to discuss the work of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

It is important to me that the department delivers at pace against the government's agenda. We have and continue to make a huge amount of progress, and we have a busy autumn ahead. My current expectations are that by Christmas I will: launch the BBC Charter Review; work with parliamentary colleagues to pass essential secondary legislation enabling the Independent Football Regulator to tackle bad owners; announce a Town of Culture competition; receive Baroness Hodge's Review of Arts Council England; and publish our cross-government National Youth Strategy.

I have provided an update below on each of the ten issues raised in your letter and I look forward to continuing discussions with your Committee as we develop work in these and other areas.

**1. The BBC**

I share the Committee's concerns about the potential impacts of the outsourcing and offshoring of roles at the BBC, and my officials and I have raised these concerns directly with them. I appreciate there are funding challenges facing the BBC which we aim to resolve as part of the Charter Review. However, one of the most important roles of the BBC is the employment it creates across the country and this government takes that role very seriously.

**2. Safety of journalists in Gaza**

I am committed to ensuring that my department supports the crucial work of the FCDO on international media freedom and journalist safety abroad, building on my own responsibility



for domestic media freedom. I am actively engaging with media and civil society organisations to hear their concerns about the ongoing situation in Gaza. Later this month, I will convene a roundtable with representatives from UK civil society organisations to hear directly from them about the support they are giving – and the challenges they are facing, and I receive regular updates from press and media organisations from my own and officials' meetings with them.

It is vital that we protect media freedom on the international stage - journalists must be able to investigate and report independently without fear. Through the FCDO, the UK recently signed a Media Freedom Coalition (MFC) statement with 28 other countries, urging Israel to allow independent international journalists into Gaza, and to be allowed to conduct their work freely and safely. We also provided £250,000 to UNESCO's Special Account for Gaza, a fund focused on supporting journalists and media to deliver their vital work.

### **3. Press standards**

On press standards, I remain committed to carefully considering the issues raised by Hacked Off. I have huge sympathy for those who have experienced press intrusion. As I set out during the Committee hearing, I have made a personal commitment to the affected families that I would not promise anything I can't deliver. This is an area which requires care and sensitivity. I want to ensure the balance is right between what are clearly instances of intrusion, and ensuring press freedom, which is vital to giving the public access to accurate and trustworthy information from a range of sources. I am carefully considering next steps to determine the best route forward to ensure public trust in our news media.

### **4. Arts Council England funding portal**

DCMS continues to support Arts Council England (ACE) to resolve the issues facing its grants system, Grantium. This includes regular official level engagement to oversee ACE's progress on restoring service in the short-to-medium term and providing support on specific technical matters. As part of his recent introductory meeting with ACE's Chair and Chief Executive, the Minister for Arts, Ian Murray, discussed the issues facing ACE and any further support which the department could provide.

### **5. Young people's engagement with arts and music provision**

Regarding the source of the statistic I used on access to arts and music provision, I was referring to the DCMS Youth Survey Pilot Report (published 7 November 2024) which states that "a fifth of young people had taken part in art or music-related activities over the past year" in relation to participation in organised clubs and societies related to arts and music. This statistic does not include access to arts and music provision at school and I will make a formal correction to the transcript to make this clear. Nevertheless, those figures are stark and addressing this is a priority for me. ACE is publishing new figures on participation of young people later this year which will give a figure on the overall levels of participation.

### **6. British film and high-end TV**

I am fully aligned with the Committee's desire to see the British independent film sector thrive and ensure British film and high-end TV production remain globally competitive. As regards



tax reliefs, the Creative Industries Sector Plan recognised the importance of stable, efficient and competitive tax measures for film and TV production.

DCMS and HMT have had regular discussions with the Film Distributors Association on its specific proposal for tax relief support for film distribution. The Chancellor makes decisions on tax policy at fiscal events in the context of the wider public finances and my department is, of course, working closely with HMT in advance of the Autumn Budget.

More broadly, and as noted in the government's response to the Committee's recent report, the government is committed to ensuring that all public money is spent and targeted effectively across the full breadth of the creative industries and the economy.

## **7. Copyright and artificial intelligence**

You asked when to expect a response to the consultation on copyright and artificial intelligence. We need to ensure that the UK's copyright framework continues to support the success of our creative industries while fostering the benefits of AI, including to the creative industries themselves.

Since the consultation closed, officials have been analysing the 11,500 responses and engaging further with stakeholders. The Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology and I have also had constructive discussions with representatives of the creative and AI industries.

We will report on copyright and AI, including the outcomes of the government's consultation and next steps, before 18 March 2026 at the latest (as required under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025). We will also update Parliament on progress in December, as set out in the Act.

## **8. Gambling harms**

We recognise that charities would like to see clarity as soon as possible regarding how to access funding under the new statutory levy system. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and NHS England, as England's lead commissioning bodies for prevention and treatment respectively, are continuing to work at pace on their respective gambling harms programmes. In parallel, funding for organisations in the National Gambling Support Network will continue to be provided by GambleAware until March 2026 to bridge the gap on treatment and prevention whilst the new Commissioners make decisions regarding future funding. Both OHID and NHS England remain committed to ensuring all stakeholders receive regular and timely updates to ensure crucial services continue to operate and to support a smooth transition to the new levy system. Further clarity on national provision and future funding arrangements will be provided in November. During the transition period, Commissioners will ensure that all of those accessing help and support under the current system are able to do so, and in the event that an existing service was to close, they will ensure that patients are safely transferred into appropriate services.

The Gambling Minister has recently met with a number of charities, and held a roundtable with treatment providers in the National Gambling Support Network. The Minister is happy to meet with the third sector throughout this important transition period. However, detailed spending decisions will be for the lead commissioning bodies.

## **9. Public appointments subject to pre-appointment hearings**

It is a key personal priority for me that the diversity of our appointments is increased, including ensuring that candidates are representative of the entire country. Since 1 April 2025, we have made 65 regulated appointments (50 appointments and 15 reappointments). Of these: 54% are to women; 48% to individuals outside London/the South East; 13% to those from ethnic minority backgrounds; and 5% to those with a declared disability. I am determined that we will improve upon this further.

We have a number of ongoing high priority campaigns, including the Charity Commission Chair where I expect to make an announcement shortly. As set out in Minister Peacock's letter of 3 October, we have also confirmed David Kogan as Independent Football Regulator Chair, as well as two Non-Executive Director appointments. As per the Minister's letter, whilst we initially sought to wait for the outcome of the inquiry to confirm appointment, we did not consider it was in the best interests of the game or football fans to delay any longer.

In your letter of 22 September, you helpfully set out the eight appointments made by DCMS subject to pre-appointment hearings since 2018 which you have clarified is what you were referencing in the session. Of those eight cases over seven years, three were investigated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments (the Charity Commission Chairs in 2018 and 2022 and the BBC Chair in 2023) and all three investigations resulted in a finding that the processes run by DCMS were fully compliant with the Governance Code for Public Appointments and that DCMS officials had run good and thorough campaigns. My department remains absolutely committed to the highest standards for all public appointments campaigns. DCMS is responsible for over 400 public appointment roles and has handled 66 appointments so far this year.

There is, of course, always room for improvement. In June, the Permanent Secretary commissioned an internal review of the department's public appointments process and systems in order to provide me with reassurance that our processes are as robust as possible, and that we are working as effectively as possible with key stakeholders including Ministers, No 10, the Cabinet Office, the Commissioner for Public Appointments and your Committee. There are a number of recommendations that have been, or are being, implemented, including the development of a new data management tool to support the requirements for timelines as set out in the Code, strengthening of relationships with key stakeholders (as above), and an updated appointments announcement protocol.

## **10. Women's football**

The UK seeks to be a global leader in women's sport and I want to encourage all in the sector to work together to facilitate breaking down barriers and providing space for women's sport to be seen and to thrive.

Karen Carney's 2023 Independent Review of Women's Football draws attention to the lack of scheduling consistency within the women's game across the football broadcast calendar. As the Committee will be aware, Article 48 is a UEFA statute that national football governing bodies (in this case, the FA) can opt into to create a broadcast blackout for 2.5 hours on a Saturday. Leagues need to work with the FA to request that they opt into this statute.

Although editorial and commercial decisions remain a decision for broadcast rights holders, the government encourages broadcasters to review the current restrictions and work with women's sport entities to provide a breadth and depth of coverage that is equivalent to the



increased demand for and growth of women's sport. As set out in Karen Carney's Review, broadcasters and the football authorities should work together to carve out dedicated slots for women's football, during which no other football is shown.

I would like to thank the Committee for such a constructive session. I welcome the challenge and scrutiny you provide as we seek to ensure the UK continues to bring the nation together through culture, media and sport and ensure every person in the UK is able to live a richer, larger life.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa'.

Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP  
**Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**