The Mighty Creatives

LCB Depot

31 Rutland Street, Leicester

LE1 1RE

info@themightycreatives.com

[www.themightycreatives.com](http://www.themightycreatives.com)

t: +44 (0) 116 2616834

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Dear Rt. Hon. Oliver Dowden M.P. C.B.E.,

**285 SUPPORTERS FROM THE ARTS, EDUCATION, VOLUNTARY, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO PUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF CULTURAL RECOVERY**

We are writing to thank you for your imagination and ambition in supporting the arts and heritage sectors with your recent announcement of the £1.57bn Emergency Support Package. We are convinced that this will make a significant contribution to supporting the arts and heritage sectors at a time when they are most under threat.

We are concerned though that in the forthcoming weeks that in aiming to support our nation’s cultural ‘crown jewels’ there is a risk that the ‘levelling up’ agenda the government has been so vocally advocating since it was elected last year will be forgotten.

Whilst no-one could deny the role that our London organisations have in contributing to the cultural and economic capital of the nation, we are asking you not to forget the power and influence of our region’s cultural organisations: and particularly to remember the positive effects they have on our children and young people, the real ‘Jewels in the Crown’.

As one of the Arts Council England’s Bridge organisations, The Mighty Creatives works hand in hand with our partners – many of whom are signatories to this letter – to transform the lives of children and young people in the region through the power of arts and culture. This has been especially true during these challenging times of Covid-19.

Even before the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, child poverty was rising, school budgets were under pressure, waiting lists for mental health services were unacceptably long, and services supporting families and protecting children from abuse and neglect were at breaking point. We know there is no certainty about when the crisis will end and when we can see loved ones again and we also know there is more financial hardship to come.

But we also know that culture and creativity can play a massive part in contributing to solutions to child poverty by improving personal self-esteem, cultural confidence, educational attainment and economic achievement.

We believe that your Emergency Support Package could be the start of a rescue, recovery and rebuild plan which prioritises, supports and enables our artists to transform the cultural lives of children.

We call on you to support cultural investment in our children and young people by ensuring the Emergency Support Packages supports innovation between artists, educators and young people across the country and is committed to supporting the 1 in 7 children in need across the country: particularly those who have been forgotten and left behind in recent years.

It’s now time for artists’ strengths and abilities in transforming children’s lives to be acknowledged across the country and we urge you to use your power and influence to ensure this vision can be achieved.

Yours sincerely,

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**Dr. Nick Owen M.B.E. Felicity Woolf**

**CEO, The Mighty Creatives Chair of Trustees, The Mighty Creatives**

**CC Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP**

**Read and signed in support by:**

Adel Al-Salloum Director, The Spark Arts for Children & Chair, The City Classroom (LCEP)

Lucy Alderson Property Manager Nottingham City Council

Steven Allbutt Director studionAme

Rachel Amery Head of Finance Nottingham Playhouse Trust Ltd

Bipin Anand MD ImageNova

Jiten Anand Director Inspirate

Marian Anderson Marketing Manager Made With Many

Abdul Asghar Head of Public Sector Partnerships The Prince's Trust

Elizabeth Atkin Founder and Owner Grubby Knees Community Theatre

Vince Attwood Director Soft Touch Arts

Rachel Ayrton Learning & Interpretation Manager King Richard III Visitor Centre

Sabiha Azad Helpline advisor advocate Promo Cymru

Annie Bannister Access Consultant

Marianne Barraclough Deputy Chief Executive – Programme Sinfonia Viva

Andy Barrett Artistic Director Excavate

Steve Battlemuch Councillor & Trustee, Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham City Council

Claire Baxter Director Richmond Baxter Ltd

Marcellus Baz CEO Switch Up

Trudy Bell Creative Learning Director Royal & Derngate, Northampton

Manya Benenson Talent Devlopment Producer New Art Exchange

Josh Bentley Student De Montfort University

Peter Bevington Curriculum Director SHINE Multi Academy Trust

Yogesh Bhatt Director Self employed

Rebecca Blackwood Founder and Director Of Many Circles

Fiona Blake Teacher Overseal Primary School

Jonathan Blakes Software Engineer Experian

Marisa Blissett Programme Coordinator The City Classroom

Edward Boott Artistic Director & CEO Nonsuch Studios

Michelle Bowen Director UK New Artists

Annesha Bowman Garment Technician The Vampire’s Wife

Emily Bowman Deputy CEO The Mighty Creatives

John Braddock Director Formation Audio Ltd

Jo Bradley Lead Development YMCA Nottinghamshire

Jo Bradley Development Lead Malt Cross, Nottingham

Gill Brailey Director of Learning National Justice Museum

James Brindle Director Magna Vitae

Sarah Brigham CEO and Artistic Director Derby Theatre

Donna Briscoe-Greene Artistic Director and Land-lady The Maypole Cafe Bar and Theatre

Richard Bromhall Project Manager Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature

Corinna Brown Extended Services Coordinator Asquith Primary School

Corinna Brown Extended Services Coordinator Berry Hill Primary School

Simon Brown Managing Director ArtReach

Katie Bunting Creative Learning Officer Royal & Derngate

Jane Burd Coordinator Nottingham City of Sanctuary

Adam Buss CEO QUAD, Derby

Tony Butler Executive Director Derby Museums

Michaela Butter MBE Director Attenborough Arts Centre

Antonia Byatt Chief Executive First Story

Ruby Campbell Actor

Mike Candler Chair, The Spark Arts for Children The Spark Arts for Children

Rosanna Cant Community Manager The Audience Agency

Yasmin Canvin Director Leicester Print Workshop Studios and Resource

Jayne Carter Director Ignite Education Ltd

Holly Cassidy Event Manager Cassidy Creations

Tim Casson Artistic Director Casson & Friends

Kev Castle Freelance theatre reviewer and radio presenter 1963

Phil Cave Freelancer

Sarah Chau Support worker

Catherine Chivers Dance and Drama teacher Manor Arts

Gary Cicinskas Marketing and Communications Manager ArtReach

Claire Claxton Self-employed CXP Consulting Ltd

Sarah Cook Arts Development Officer Gedling Borough Council

Nigel Cooke Chair ChalleNGe – the Cultural Education Partnership

Shannon Coote Manager Moving Together

Mikey Cottle Project Manager Bikes Love You

Tony Coxon Site manager Robin Hood Primary School

Jane Crawshaw Artistic Director and Producer Barmpot Theatre

John Crawshaw Retired

Charlene Cresswell Head of Performing Arts Landau Forte College Derby

Katie Cresswell School Business Manager Alfreton Nursery School

Jodie Cresswell-Waring Director Platform Thirty1

Joe Crofton Co-Director Soft Touch Arts

Fintan Cullen Retired

Rebecca Cullen Poet and Project Manager Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature

James Dacre Artistic Director Royal & Derngate

Tom Dale Artistic director Tom Dale Company

Charles Dall'Omo CEO Train Together

Claire Daniel Curriculum Leader Expressive Arts The Ferrers School

Christopher Davies Artistic Director and Chief Executive Bamboozle Theatre Company

Margaret Davy Teaching Assistant Robin Hood Primary School

Andrew Dawson Youth Arts Manager Inspire Youth Arts

Alison Denholm Creative Development Manager City Arts, Nottingham

Jeniesha Doyle Manager Base 51 Counselling Service

Kate Dyer Art Director Corby Community Arts

Toby Ealden Artistic Director Zest Theatre

Phillip Edgell Painter / Musician Son of

Georgina Elsom Freelancer

Tim Evans Artistic Director Infinite Egg Theatre CIC

Louise Fedotov-Clements Artistic Director/Director QUAD/FORMAT

Rachel Feneley Learning Officer Drama & Dance Lakeside Arts

Tina Fenlon Teaching Assistant Morley Primary School

Kevin Flint Headteacher Morton Primary School

Nikolai Foster Artistic Director Curve

Donna Fox CEO EMCCAN

Janet French Drama-therapist Catharsis Creative Arts Therapies

Ian Gardiner Creative producer Offshoots (East Midlands) CIC

Helen Garrigan Culture Manager Nottingham Trent University

Nathan Geering Theatre director Rationale

Sara Giddens Choreographer and creative facilitator Bodies in Flight

Alan Gilby Director LeftLion

James Gillam Director Fabula Arts

Fred Glenister Videographer Offshoots

Kelly Grace Project manager Soft Touch Arts Ltd

Laura Grant Director Freedom Foundation CIC

Tony Graves Associate Professor De Montfort University

Sandra Greatorex Education Curator QUAD

Emrys Green Business & Projects Manager Upstart Projects

Lilian Greenwood MP for Nottingham South Houses of Parliament

Karl Greenwood Director First Art

Jim Grevatte Curator Framework Knitters Museum

Rick Hall Founder Associate Ignite Futures Ltd

Christine Hall Professor of Education University of Nottingham

Hannaa Hamdache Arts Alliances Coordinator The Mighty Creatives

Karen Hammond Creative Lead Mellor Community Primary School

Julian Hanby Project Manager Lincolnshire One Venues

Sally Harrison Manager South Holland Centre Spalding

Sarah-Ann Hassall Actor and Teacher Front Row Theatre

Rachel Hathway Finance and Resources Officer The Mighty Creatives

Tim Hatton Business Owner Tim Hatton Consulting

Liz Haynes Finance Manager Soft Touch Arts

Claire Hennegan Teacher Branston Junior Academy

Jenny Hibberd Multi-disciplinary artist Hibword

David Hill Chair and Founding Director ArtReach

Roger Hill Freelance Creative

Diane Hinchliffe Poetry Therapist Creative People Development

Samantha Holgate-Davey Principal Arts Officer Inspire Youth Arts

Simon Hollingworth Freelance Creative Producer Mr Holly

Chris Howarth Deputy Headteacher Ripley St John's

Kevin Hudson Content Specialist Kaplan

Mark Humphreys Chief Executive Magna Vitae

Mai Hussein Client Development Manager

Martin Ingham CEO Motorpoint Arena Nottingham

Baby J Managing Director Baby People

Emily Jackson Director Moving Together

Nicki Jarvis Freelance artist / community artist Nicki Jarvis / Vessel Projects

Samantha Jennings Creative class leader Story Imaginory

Uzma Johal MBE Director Threshold Studios

Jimmy Johnson Director Event Show Support CIC

Kim Johnson Arts Education Officer Virtual School

Vikki Jones Engagement Coordinator UK New Artists

Karla Jones Co-Producer Hubbub Theatre Company

Joanna Jones Head of Arts, Museums, Festivals and Events Leicester City Council

Nick Jones Director Transported Art

Susan Jones Associate Professor University of Nottingham

Nathifa Jordan Business Manager EMCCAN Board Director

Gavin Joynt Photographer Gavin Joynt Photography

Robin Junga MD, Chair Sirkus Ltd, Canning Circus Creative hub

Louise Kay Learning Assistant Lakeside Arts

Chris Kirkwood CEO Lincoln Drill Hall

Darcy Kitchener Manager Moving Together

Bruce Knight Managing Director The Sessions House CIC

Michael Knight Retired St Stephen's Church, Sneinton

Scott Knowles Chief Executive East Midlands Chamber of Commerce

Rebecca Langton Councillor/ Portfolio Holder for Communities Nottingham City Council

Steff Lee Creative Director Kino Bino

Ruth Lee Director of Development People Dancing

Ruth Lewis-Jones Learning Producer Ruth Lewis-Jones

Alice Littlehailes Headteacher St Luke's CE Primary School

Emma Lomas-Clarke Workforce & Organisational Development Manager SSBC

Paul Long Creative Director MBD (metro-boulot-dodo)

David Longford Creative Learning Manager Theatre Royal & Royal Concert Hall Nottingham

Sally Longford Deputy Leader Nottingham City Council

Lucy Lumb Visual Arts Development Co-ordinator The National Centre for Craft & Design (Lincs Inspire)

Sharon MacInnes Head of Faculty for Creative and Performing Arts Bilborough College

Rona Mackenzie Chair of Board of Directors Zest Theatre

Tracey Mackenzie Theatre Manager Louth Riverhead Theatre

Matt Madej Business Advisor Nottingham Trent University

Cathy Mahmood ChalleNGe Manager ChalleNGe, Nottingham's Cultural Education Partnership

Vivek Malhotra Freelance Arts Business Consultant

Charlotte Malik Hub Manager Read On Nottingham

Liam Maloy Freelance musician, educator and researcher Liam Maloy Music

Jasbir Mann Headteacher Falcons Primary School

Sarah Manton Artist Curious Nottingham Ltd

Melissa March Councillor for Knighton Leicester City Council

Mandi Maripise Board Member The Mighty Creatives

Tim Marren CEO Peter Le Marchant Trust

Caron Mason Dance Teacher 52nd Street Jump

Stephen Mason Tutor, Coach and Dance Teacher Steve Mason Education and Lincolnshire Lindy Hop Clubs

Mick McGrath Development Officer Locality

Joanna McIntyre Associate Professor in Education University of Nottingham

Amanda McLaren Arts Consultant Amanda McLaren trading as Partake

Diana Meale Councillor Member, Nottinghamshire County Council

Dianne Meecham Project Administrator Soft Touch Arts Ltd

Nicola Middler Projects manager The Spark Arts for Children

Matt Miller Freelance Artist Matt Miller Theatre

Vijay Mistry Manager 2Funky Arts

Hema Mistry Director Pedestrian Ltd

Gina Mollett Learning & Community Coordinator BACKLIT Gallery

Monica Moreno Pedagogical Director M&M Profuture Training, S.L.

Craig Morrow Artistic Director Lincoln Performing Arts Centre

Tim Morton Director Tim Morton Associates Ltd

Tendai Mugumbate Quantity Surveyor

Henderson Mullin CEO Writing East Midlands

Fadzie Murena Nurse NHS

Danny Myers Assistant City Mayor Leicester City Council

Yuka Namekawa Director StudionAme C.I.C

Sally Norman Co-director Soft Touch Arts

Amy O'Sullivan Community Dance Artist

Grace Osbourne Marketing and Audience Development Coordinator

Janice Owen Cultural Heritage Guide Be Guided, Be Inspired

Vanessa Oxspring Freelancer arts and cultural manager and consultant Vcreate

Susan Paez Founder A Cuerpo

Rory Palmer Former Member of the European Parliament and former Deputy City Mayor of Leicester

Carolyne Parker Teacher Ashgate Primary School, Derby

Vanessa Parkes Subject Leader Art The Trinity Catholic School

Sue Parry Lecturer Nottingham Trent University

Mehul Patel Director Reel Monkey Productions Ltd

Bee Patience Comms and Marketing Manager The Mighty Creatives

Joe Pick Marketing & Audience Development City Arts (Nottingham)

Helen Platt-Hawkins Head of Art Worksop College

Danielle Potter Business Support Officer Leicestershire County Council

Ann Priest Retired Pro Vice Chancellor

Claire Pring Dance education consultant Claire Pring Dance

Tracy Radford Creative Producer Unanima Theatre

Jon Rea Founder Blidworth Art Club

Caroline Rees Headteacher Granby Junior School

Matthew Riley Deputy Head Teacher Oak Field School

Christian Roberts Officer Nottingham City Council Markets and Fairs

Will Robinson Managing Director I'm Not From London

John Robinson Independent Creative Producer Independent

Sue Robinson Teaching Assistant Robin Hood Primary School, Nottingham

Sam Roddan Director Art Pop-Up

Nathan Rose Head of Props Workshop Nottingham Playhouse

Rebecca Rose Head of Development The Mighty Creatives

Tommy Rosley Hockely Hustle Director Hockley Hustle

Tommy Rosley Festival Co-Ordinator/Promoter Nottingham Poetry Festival

Tommy Rosley Event Producer Young Hustlers

Harriet Roy General Manager The Spark Arts for Children

Peter Rumney Associate Artist Nottingham Contemporary

Paul Russ Chief Executive / Artistic Director Dance4

Laura Rutty Company and Participation Manager Tom Dale Company

Hassnain Safdar Optometrist

Hannah Satchwell SEND art teacher

Rachel Scanlon Artist Freelance

Diana Schwanz Teacher Seely Primary & Nursery School

Nettie Scriven Co-artistic director Dragon Breath Theatre

Ruchita Shaikh Executive Director Artcore

Stephanie Sirr Chief Executive Nottingham Playhouse

Jackie Sloan Virtual EA Sloan & Company

Peter Smalley Chief Executive Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust

Anne Smith Partnership Member CKHL (Creative Kingswood and Hazel Leys)

Chris Smith - Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury Chair of Art Fund, Former Secretary of State for Culture

Tim Smith Youth Theatre Leader Willpower

Amanda Spruyt Head of Learning Nottingham Contemporary

Zuli Stannard Development Officer Voluntary Action Leicestershire

Ivana Starcevic Arts Lead and Class Teacher Radcliffe On Trent Junior School

Chris Stenton Executive Director People Dancing

James Steventon Director Fermynwoods Contemporary Art

David S. Stewart OBE Trustee The Mighty Creatives

Lorrie Stock Development coordinator The Mighty Creatives

Morgan Stockton Gallery Education and Marketing Coordinator Leicester Gallery

Jen Sumner Artistic Director Hubbub Theatre Company

D. Hayes Teacher St Paul's Catholic School Leicester

Racquel Thomas-Smith Trustee The Mighty Creatives

Pat Thomson Professor of Education The University of Nottingham

Sam Thorne Director Nottingham Contemporary

Jamie Thrasivoulou Freelance writer, poet and educator Jamie Thrasivoulou Poet

Sian Tower Education Manager Writing East Midlands

Lynne Towle Project Officer National Literacy Trust

Dave Trimble Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture Nottingham City Council

Denis Tully CEO Emmanuel House

Julia Turner Teacher Greenfield Primary School

Kate Twist Teacher Willpower Theatre and Dance Academy

Nick Tyler Director MissImp: Improv Comedy Theatre

Lydia Unsudimi Festival Coordinator Artreach

Sandeep Virdee OBE Artistic Director Darbar Arts Culture and Heritage Trust

Michaela Waldram-Jones Executive Producer Tom Dale Company

Morcea Walker Volunteer with NCAC Northampton Carnival Arts Consortium

Sam Whelan Director Platform Thirty1

Jordan White Teacher and Trustee of TMC Nottingham City Council

Kerry Whiting Arts lead teacher Robin Hood Primary School

Alison Whitlock Head of Talent Development Confetti Media Group

Christina Wigmore Director Soft Touch Arts

Amanda Wilde Co-Artistic Director Red Earth Theatre

Deana Wildgoose Connector Thinkfc

David Williams Chairman Geldards LLP / D2N2 LEP

Nic Williams Community Lead The Renewal Trust

Helen Willmott Programme Director Made with Many

Jason Wilsher-Mills Artist Jason Wilsher-Mills

Michael Wilson Professor of Drama/Head of Creative Arts Loughborough University

Olivia Wood Fundraising and Communications Manager

Emily York Audience Development Manager The Mighty Creatives

Sarah Zendera Teacher Taylor Road School