

# COVID threatens creative diversity, study finds

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Credit: University of Edinburgh

Experts have been working with politicians to set out a blueprint that enables the sector to address the challenges it faces.

They have identified several tools to support industry-wide action, focusing on areas such as funding conditions, recruitment practices and diversity monitoring and targets.

The findings, set out in a parliamentary report titled Creative Majority,

also includes proposals for more accessible spaces, freelancer support and flexible working.

An All-Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity worked with researchers from Edinburgh and King's College London to produce a framework of key principles.

## **Guiding principles**

Recommendations, based on the year-long research project, are intended to bring about immediate and long-lasting change, and prompt action from the industry and government.

Labour MP and APPG co-chair Chi Onwurah warned that without concerted action, barriers that existed before the coronavirus crisis could be reinforced as the sector emerges from it.

For too long, Ms Onwurah said, the UK's creative industries have been dominated by a narrow subset of the population that does not represent our country as a whole.

The pandemic has only deepened this issue, with fewer creative organizations, fewer job opportunities and fewer openings for diverse talent.

## **Lost talent**

Without action, said Ms Onwurah, the UK risks exacerbating inequalities in the creative industries further and an entire generation of talent could be lost.

The report highlights the plight facing the creative industries, which

have experienced among the worst job losses of any sector during the pandemic.

It stresses that younger and freelance workers have been hit hardest, as well as people with disabilities and individuals who have not engaged with higher education.

## Urgent steps

Without these urgent steps, there is a real risk that the creative sector workforces could become more unequal, said report co-author Dr. Dave O'Brien, of Edinburgh College of Art.

"The pandemic has proven that change, on a [massive scale](#), is possible in a short time frame—the same momentum should be applied to equity, diversity and inclusion in the arts," said Dr. O'Brien.

"It should be based around five guiding principles—ambition, allyship, accessibility, adaptability and accountability—which can be used as a framework for effective practice and progress."

**More information:** Report: [www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/projects/creative-majority](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/projects/creative-majority)

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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