

Boris Johnson MP
House of Commons
Houses of Parliament
London
SW1A 0AA

26 June 2019

Dear Mr Johnson

I am writing as Chief Executive of the Society of Authors about the Conservative Party leadership election and support for the creative industries.

The Society of Authors is the UK trade union for more than 10,500 writers, illustrators and literary translators, at all stages of their careers. We've been advising individuals and speaking out for the profession since 1884.

As you know the creative industries generate £102 billion a year for the UK economy, employing one in 11 people across the country. Our sector also carries an immense social impact and is an unrivalled source of soft power across the world. None of these benefits would be felt without the imagination and dedication of creators. The contribution of authors is felt across the sector – not just in publishing but in film, theatre and television.

Despite this considerable social and economic impact, authors are struggling. A survey carried out by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) in 2018 found that authors' incomes are in decline, with the average author in the UK earning £10,500 per year. This should worry us all – if authors are unable to make a living from their work, the supply of new and innovative writing will simply dry up.

The reasons for this decline are of course varied and complex. Publishing royalties and advances are down, and industry has transformed dramatically over the last two decades. But there are areas where the Government could provide greater support for authors, for example by increasing funding for literature through the Arts Council, and ensuring that the Copyright Directive is transposed into UK law, having now been agreed by the EU.

As a published author yourself, I hope that you will commit to supporting authors and the wider cultural sector should you become Prime Minister. I would also like to invite you to join the Society of Authors as a member. Please visit <https://www.societyofauthors.org/Join> for more information.

I look forward to hearing from you about your plans to support the creative industries should you become Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely,



Nicola Solomon
Chief Executive