**Dear [insert name] MP**

The UK’s creative industries contribute over £111 billion to the UK economy each year, yet they have been dealt a double blow by Covid and Brexit.

Theatres have been particularly badly hit – forced to close their doors for nearly a year since the first lockdown, and with a full reopening looking unlikely until June 21 at the very earliest. Commissions for new plays have dried up, with many freelance playwrights unsure where their next pay cheque will come from.

While the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has been a welcome lifeline for many, an estimated three million freelancers in the UK are falling through the gaps, receiving no support at all in the past 11 months.

Domestic film and TV productions have benefited from insurance schemes in the pandemic, but the Government’s failure to agree travel rights for UK creators post-Brexit is due to have a huge impact on the sector.

When Covid restrictions are lifted, touring in EU states for UK creators will require costly administration and time-consuming bureaucracy, impacting on a wide range of writers and creative sectors, including videogames.

Reading has enjoyed a renaissance in the pandemic, yet authors’ incomes remain low, with average annual earnings less than £10,500.

**My union the Writers’ Guild of Great Britain is calling on the Chancellor to ensure he writes writers into his Budget. Please urge him to:**

* Implement another round of the SEISS to provide support to freelancers on the road out of lockdown plus increase it to achieve parity with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough), so that self-employed workers achieve the same amount of financial support as their PAYE counterparts.
* Fix the current gaps in the SEISS which mean that, due to no fault of their own and often as a result of a quirk in the system, around three million self-employed workers have gone without a penny of Government support for nearly a year.
* Maintain the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift and keep the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor until the creative sector is fully open.
* Increase funding for Public Lending Right. The scheme, which WGGB members played a key role in campaigning for, means authors are paid from Government funding when their books, audio books, e-books and e-audio books are borrowed from public libraries.
* Establish a UK Creators Council to improve engagement with the creative workforce via their trade unions as the Government’s roadmap unfolds.
* Amend the Culture Recovery Fund guidance so that support can be distributed directly to the freelance workforce as the sector recovers.

Yours sincerely

[insert your name]