

General Election Manifesto for Arts and Cultural Learning

The arts have the power to change and shape young people's lives.

The knowledge, skills and experience made possible by the arts are essential to young people's development.

A strong arts education is the key to diversifying our workforce, tackling social inequality and giving young people the skills they need to innovate and to contribute to the global economy.

We are asking the government to make arts and cultural learning commitments which span:

- Education
- Wellbeing
- Social mobility
- The cultural sector

And which reflect joined-up action on key issues.

1) Education, wellbeing and social mobility

- **Truly outstanding schools**

Ofsted inspections should be required to recognise and comment on the quality of arts and cultural learning in their reports, both praising great practice and flagging up where more needs to be done.

There must be new guidance from Ofsted that no school, academy, youth service or children's centre be judged outstanding unless it offers a broad and balanced curriculum that includes the arts and culture.

- **Continued funding for arts education**

The Department for Education currently funds a number of important strategic initiatives via Arts Council England and directly to others, including strategic funding for the network of Music Hubs and for Museums and Schools Partnerships. These programmes have national significance and it is critical that they be maintained and confirmed.

- **A national policy focus on STEAM (adding the A of Arts to STEM subjects)**

Innovation stimulates economic growth; new ideas and new thinking are required in an ever-changing and fast-paced world. Creativity fostered by arts engagement develops future leaders and entrepreneurs who solve problems differently from those educated solely in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). To remain competitive, the UK education system needs to develop the STEM agenda, humanising science and technology through its fusion with the Arts. It must widen its current policy and investment focus on STEM to create one for STEAM.

We are calling for the creation of 50 STEAM specialist schools across the country to work with industry leaders, local arts partners and to become trailblazers for a world-class STEAM education.

- **An Arts and Wellbeing Premium to match that which exists for PE and Sport**
The Government should mirror the current Premium for PE and Sport (where every school with primary age pupils gets ring-fenced funds of approximately £8,000 for the promotion of PE and Sport). It should create an equivalent for the Arts and Wellbeing.

A Premium for Arts and Wellbeing would allow schools to personalise their offer to the needs of their pupils, to the local community and to arts provision – both through extending horizons and offering access to things children already love. It would also act as an excellent mechanism for capturing outcome data on Arts and Wellbeing interventions.

- **A strong talent pipeline for the arts and culture**
We are calling for changes to the deployment of the Apprenticeships Levy funds to allow for local and sectoral-footprint coordination and support for Creative Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships in our sector have seen some of the fastest growth in uptake over the last five years; four times faster than any sector. We also **need new technical qualifications to be developed in real partnership with industry**, and to reflect the needs of the freelancers and micro-businesses that make up the creative sector. **We also need careers advice that is delivered locally by specialists; clusters of education and industry partners**, and which reflects real jobs and careers.

2) A strong and thriving arts sector

- For every child to access arts and culture, it is essential that the arts and cultural sector work in partnership with the education sector. **This requires a thriving and stable sector, which in turn requires sustained, regular investment in arts and culture at current levels and in line with inflation across the whole country.**

It is essential that the arts and culture, and education are given the right sector deals as part of the UK's exit from the European Union. **We need a package that ensures our talent pipeline, our access to funding and free movement of people.**

As a sector we value our strong relationships with the Department of Culture, Media & Sport and with its arms-length bodies: Arts Council England; the Heritage Lottery Fund; and the British Film Institute.

3) Joined-up action on key issues

There are a number of underlying issues that must be addressed by government and the sector working together:

- **Education**

The current recruitment and funding crisis in schools must be addressed, or the arts will become an unintended casualty. There are widespread reports of cuts to arts courses and to specialist teachers in schools. Cultural Learning Alliance figures show a drop of 21% in uptake of arts courses at GCSE since 2010 and a 15% decline in both the number of hours taught in arts subjects and the numbers of specialist teachers in secondary schools. **We need a school system that is well-resourced and which focusses on equality of access to the arts and culture for all children and young people.** We want every young person to be given the opportunity to develop their social and cultural capital, and have not seen any evidence that a system that is more focussed on selection is the way to achieve this.

Employers are clear that they want to see children and young people with the creative, entrepreneurial and communication skills that a study of the arts offers, but parents, young people, teachers and universities do not always receive this message clearly. The English Baccalaureate has become the overarching policy priority for secondary schools, with current DfE proposals to judge secondary schools as many as six times on the same measure (Progress 8, Attainment 8, EBacc numbers, EBacc achievement, Ofsted, EBacc average point score). This cannot be efficient or effective. **We are calling for the accountability system to be radically simplified, reducing needless bureaucracy and creating much more choice for children and families.** At the same time, we want to see government and the arts sector working together actively promote the benefits of culture in education.

- **Local government**

Similarly, Local Authorities are the largest overall funders of the arts and culture. Over the last seven years, significant cuts have been made to local authorities (LAs). These cuts have been difficult for authorities to absorb and have been passed on to arts and cultural organisations, to schools and to education providers. As these cuts continue we expect to see more and more organisations struggling to survive, despite the innovative models and flexible approaches that they are developing in response.

We are calling for a commitment to **place the arts and culture at the heart of regeneration strategies, city and devolution and Growth Deals**, as well as inclusion within Local Economic Partnerships, local businesses and within Higher Education partnerships.



About the Cultural Learning Alliance

www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk

The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) is a collective voice working to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to culture.

The Alliance brings the diverse elements of the cultural sector together – including museums, film, libraries, heritage, dance, literature, new media arts, theatre, visual arts and music – to work with the education and youth sector, with parents and with young people. It is supported by a membership of around 12,000 organisations and individuals.

The CLA is chaired by Lord Puttnam. A Steering Group meets quarterly to oversee its work and direction, and an Advisory Panel offers expertise and strategic support.

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