



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

Rt Hon Ian Murray MP
Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
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[redacted]

Our Ref: MC2025/07728

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 July, to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP, about safeguarding within publicly funded arts organisations. I sincerely apologise for the significant delay in replying to your letter.

I am really horrified to read about the experiences of the individuals involved in this case, and I can see from your e-mail and the attached accounts how distressing it has been. We assure you that we recognise the devastating impact of sexual violence and the Government expects every report of a sexual offence to be treated seriously from the point of disclosure, every victim to be treated with dignity and every investigation and prosecution to be conducted thoroughly and professionally.

You make a number of suggestions in your e-mail, including requiring policies to be published and reviewing Arts Council England (ACE). The Department of Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS) officials have passed your suggestion of asking funded organisations to publish safeguarding policies to ACE for consideration and have passed this correspondence to the team supporting Margaret Hodge with her ongoing review of ACE.

You also make suggestions around reporting mechanisms. Where an individual suspects criminality or that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk, they should report it to the police and local authority immediately. For incidents involving other adults, the Government encourages every victim to report crimes committed against them to the Police. [Crimes can be reported](#) on-line, or by using the 101 phone number. These are the established reporting mechanisms for these safeguarding concerns or when a crime has been committed and it would not be appropriate for DCMS to fragment this by creating a new reporting route. This is especially the case as neither ACE nor DCMS have the investigatory or enforcement powers on this topic, nor is it in either organisation's formal remit to operate regulators in respect of sexual misconduct in the creative industries.

However, safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. That is why DCMS and ACE use the levers that are at our disposal to support a cultural sector that protects children and vulnerable adults, and one that does not allow for sexual harassment and abuse. Following the events raised in your correspondence, ACE held a series of meetings with individuals who were connected to these events and these conversations contributed to improvements to ACE's mechanism to allow individuals to report safeguarding and conduct concerns related to any funded organisation. ACE also requires organisations to have safeguarding policies in place for work involving children, young people, and adults at risk.

When it comes to bullying, harassment and discrimination, we expect industry to tackle this behaviour, and we consider the right vehicle for this to be the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA). The Culture Secretary has been clear and unequivocal in her support for CIISA's work, and has met with it to understand how the Government can ensure industry support. I would also like to draw your attention to the Employment Rights Bill, which will strengthen protections for whistle-blowers, by making it explicit that sexual harassment can be the basis for a protected whistle-blowing disclosure.



I am attaching some useful information on support for victims in the annex below and thank you again for writing to me about this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

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Annex: Support for victims

We encourage those affected in this case, if they have not done so already, to contact their local rape support centre for further information and support. They can provide advice and support that will assist with recovery. We know that many victims and survivors find that sexual violence has a long-term effect on their lives and their wellbeing. Details about how to do so can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/help-after-rape-and-sexual-assault/>.

Additionally, they can obtain support and advice through the Rape Crisis 24/7 Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Line, which is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year and can be called free on 0808 500 2222 or at: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/want-to-talk/>.

The Government provides funding for a range of national and local services that provide vital victim support. These services offer emotional, practical, and therapeutic support to help victims and survivors begin to cope and build resilience in the aftermath of a crime. These services include Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) who can offer particular support throughout the entirety of the Criminal Justice process.

Victim support services can be accessed at any point, regardless of when the crime happened, and are always free at the point of use. You can find support services local and available to you by accessing the Victim and Witness information website, found at: <https://victimandwitnessinformation.org.uk/>.