



Analysis of 2024 General Election manifestos for members

This analysis of the manifestos has been developed to help you engage with your local candidates in the run up to the General Election. You may also find it useful to engage with your MP, once the outcome of the General Election is known.

A reminder: SOLT & UK Theatre's key asks in the pre-election period are:

- Improve children's access by funding a visit for every child to the theatre at least once before they leave school
- Collaborate with us to develop a systematic and strategic approach to investment in theatre buildings

You can find more information about this in our pre-election briefing, available on our [websites](#)

You can access the three main UK political party manifestos here

[Conservatives](#)

[Labour](#)

[Liberal Democrats](#)

Manifesto Commitments and Analysis by Issue

Issue	Party commitments	Analysis / potential questions for candidates
Role of creative industries, funding for the arts and	<p>Conservatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure creative sector tax incentives remain competitive• Ensure creators are protected and remunerated for their work, whilst making the most of the opportunities of AI and its applications for creativity.	<p>You may want to tell candidates how theatre is special: our art forms and venues are economic powerhouses that deliver transformative social good in communities across the country. Candidates will want to hear the role you play in your community.</p>



economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritise hospitality sector for Business Rates relief.• Launch a review of the nighttime economy in England	<p>You may also want to discuss the benefits that the current high rate of Theatre Tax Relief brings to you and the need you have (if any) for capital investment in your venue, and what that investment would deliver.</p> <p>You could also make the case that conditions for the theatre sector are increasingly challenging.</p> <p>Key stats you may want to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each year, theatre generates £2.39 billion to the UK economy and supports 205,000 jobs. For every £1 spent on a theatre ticket, £1.40 is spent in local communities.• 91% of UK adults engage with the arts at least once each year, with 74% attending an arts event such as an exhibition or a theatre performance.• Theatre delivers real benefits: it builds empathy, supports wellbeing and, for children, boosts educational attainment.
	<p>Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative industries sector plan implemented as part of the industrial strategy, creating good jobs, and accelerating growth• Multi-year funding settlements for Councils• Roadmap for business taxation to be published in next parliament• Business rates to be replaced with a fairer system• 10-year infrastructure strategy• Improved transport with Mayors having a role in designing local services	
	<p>Liberal Democrats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commitment to invest in cultural capital and future talent• Will create cultural enterprise zones• Create minister for Tourism• Full participation in Creative Europe Protect National Lottery funding• Crack down on illegal ticket resales	



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities costs have risen by 120% since 2019, but ticket prices having fallen by 9.26% in real terms since 2019 and a challenging public investment environment, from both local authorities and arts councils across the UK.
<p>Children, education, and skills</p>	<p>Conservatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships are key for pipeline of talent to creative industries • Work with creative industries to deliver a dedicated flexible coordination service so that everyone who wants to work in the film, TV, gaming, and music sectors can work on live productions and receive 12 months training. • Fund 100,000 high quality apprenticeships 	<p>To note, no party references the Cultural Education Plan which was announced in 2022.</p> <p>You may want to tell candidates about the outreach work you deliver and the benefits it brings to your local area.</p> <p>SOLT & UKT are calling for the next government to fund every child to attend the theatre at least once before they leave secondary school.</p> <p>SOLT & UK Theatre launched the Theatre for Every Child Campaign in 2023 because every child has the right to experience and enjoy our country's culture and world-leading theatre, so we are asking all political parties to commit to funding to ensure that</p>
	<p>Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pledge that arts and music “will no longer be the preserve of a privileged few” and that culture is an essential part of supporting children and young people to develop creativity and find their voice. • Modernise school curriculum, make it broader and to include creative skills 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employers at heart of skills system• Abolish Skills England, employer local leaders greater control over skills they need• Reform Apprenticeship Levy, flexible Growth and Skills Levy instead• Children supportive to study creative or vocational subject until 16• Launch national Music Education Network• Immigration and skills policy to be linked, reform of immigration system	<p>every child goes to the theatre by the time they leave school.</p> <p>SOLT & UK Theatre works closely with the Cultural Learning Alliance, which states: "It is not helpful for government policy to prioritise learning to count over learning to create, nor the amount a new graduate earns over their contribution to society. When a government determines that Expressive Arts subjects are strategically unimportant the arts become systematically eroded in schools and in the higher education sector, even when we know that as well as being valuable for young people's wellbeing, the capacities, confidence, creativity, and skills gained through arts subjects are being increasingly prioritised by employers."</p>
	<p>Liberal Democrats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand curriculum to include critical thinking and creativity• Include arts subjects in English Baccalaureate and give powers to Ofsted to monitor art, music, and drama• Expand provision of extra curricula activities, including music and drama• Improve quality of vocational training• Replace apprenticeship levy with something that is more flexible• Address skills gaps by investing in vocational training• Guarantee apprentices are paid at least at national min wage	



<p>Community issues and devolution of power</p>	<p>Conservative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to introducing Martyn’s Law • Empower communities by devolving more power • £20m for highstreets regeneration, direct to towns • Extend Community Ownership Fund for community assets 	<p>You may want to tell candidates about the outreach work you deliver and the benefits it brings to your local area.</p> <p>Thriving theatres boost footfall in local economies, making the communities in which they operate attractive places to live and work. All tiers of government must put culture at the heart of local place-making and regeneration.</p>
	<p>Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More devolution to local communities, Local Growth Plans • Multi-year funding settlements for Councils 	
	<p>Lib Dems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve powers to protect community assets 	
<p>Other relevant issues</p>	<p>Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Work Pay legislation in first 100 days, will consult fully beforehand, to include banning ‘exploitative’ zero hour contracts. • Single Enforcement Body for employment rights • Low Pay Commission to account for cost of living when considering national minimum wage <p>Liberal Democrats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent review to establish genuine living wage 	<p>You may want to mention that zero hours contracts are important for the creative sector as they offer two-sided flexibility to staff who want the freedom to pursue creative ambitions. You could tell them how you use them and how this meets works’ needs, if applicable.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernise employment rights, including by establishing 'contractor status (between employed and self-employed) • Review tax of freelancers to ensure fair treatment 	
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Manifesto Commitments and Analysis by Party

Party	Overall key messages and relevant commitments	Initial analysis
Conservative	<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having 'a plan' • Stability • Security <p>Creative industries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and sport at heart of local and national identity • Ensure creators are properly protected and remunerated for their work, whilst also making the most of the opportunities of AI and its applications for creativity in the future. <p>Economy and tax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our creative sector tax incentives remain competitive. • Prioritising hospitality sector for Business Rates relief. • Launching a review of the nighttime economy in England, prevent decline of pubs and hospitality. 	<p>A combination of legacy, initiatives already announced and new plans</p> <p>Justification of time in govt</p> <p>Positive mention of culture being important but no explicit mention of theatre.</p> <p>The hospitality and theatre sector are key drivers of the UK's nighttime economy.</p>



	<p>Communities and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to introducing Martyn’s Law (Protection of Premises Duty). • Empower communities by devolving more power • £20m for highstreets regeneration, direct to towns • Extend Community Ownership Fund for community assets <p>Apprenticeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships are key for pipeline of talent to creative industries • Work with creative industries to deliver a dedicated flexible coordination service so that everyone who wants to work in the film, TV, gaming, and music sectors can work on live productions and receive 12 months training. • Fund 100,000 high quality apprenticeships 	<p>SOLT & UK Theatre stand ready to support our members prepare for future legislation to protect the public.</p>
Labour	<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change, restore hope • Economic growth, strategic partners with business • Original 5 missions still front and centre • <i>‘There is huge potential for growth in the creative industries that benefit every corner of the UK.’</i> <p>Economy and growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One major fiscal event a year • Roadmap for business taxation to be published in next parliament • Business rates to be replaced with a fairer system • 10-year infrastructure strategy • Improved transport with Mayors having a role in designing local services • Immigration and skills policy to be linked, reform of immigration system • Creative industries sector plan implemented as part of the industrial strategy, creating good jobs, and accelerating growth 	<p>No explicit mention of theatre, however creative industries mentioned as examples of what makes Britain great in context of an industrial strategy.</p> <p>Positive messages regarding children and culture, which can be a hook for the progression of Theatre for Every Child.</p> <p>Positive commitments regarding education, skills, and immigration.</p>



	<p>Education and skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Culture is an essential part of supporting children and young people to develop creativity and find their voice.'</i> • Modernise school curriculum, make it broader and to include creative skills • Employers at heart of skills system • Abolish Skills England, employer local leaders greater control over skills they need • Reform Apprenticeship Levy, flexible Growth and Skills Levy instead • Children supportive to study creative or vocational subject until 16 • Launch national Music Education Network 	<p>Commitment to consult before implementing Make Work Pay.</p> <p>SOLT & UK Theatre supports the Cultural Learning Alliance' call for an arts-rich curriculum for every child.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrats</p>	<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual power to make most of potential • Hard work and aspiration • Every child best start in life <p>Culture and growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to invest in cultural capital and future talent • Will create cultural enterprise zones • Create minister for Tourism • Full participation in Creative Europe Protect National Lottery funding • Crack down on illegal ticket resale <p>Education and skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand curriculum to include critical thinking and creativity • Include arts subjects in English Baccalaureate and give powers to Ofsted to monitor art, music, and drama 	<p>No explicit mention of theatre or creative industries.</p> <p>Education and skills seem positive e.g., improved prominence of creative subjects and extra curricula activities are welcome proposals. .</p> <p>Welcome improving careers advice if this includes creative industries.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand provision of extra curricula activities, including music and drama• Improve quality of vocational training• Replace apprenticeship levy with something that is more flexible• Address skills gaps by investing in vocational training• Strengthen careers advice and links with employers in schools and colleges. <p>Communities Improve powers to protect community assets</p>	Industrial and green sectors are talked about in terms of economic growth, little mention of creative industries in this context.
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