

Press Information: November 2020

## GCA lobbies Government to add specialist card shops to 'essential' list

The British spent £1.7bn on greetings cards in 2019 according to the GCA's annual report published this month, with over 90% or more cards sales come from individuals going out to the shops to buy their cards

During WW2 the Government declared greeting cards essential to the war effort following the important part they had played in keeping up morale during WW1 <https://www.thinkingofyouweek.cards/greeting-cards-raised-moral-during-the-two-world-wars/>

The Greeting Card Association (GCA) which represents designers, publishers, retailers, manufacturers and printers in the industry, is lobbying the Government to add specialist card shops to the list of 'essential' retail outlets which can stay open during lockdown.

One member, Runit Shah from specialist card retailer Cards Galore, has even set up a petition on [petition.parliament.uk](https://petition.parliament.uk)

[<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/557629/>] questioning the definition of 'non-essential' and covering not only card shops but other independents like florists, shoe and music shops.

*Christmas 2020 card designs  
from The London Studio*



[www.gca.cards](http://www.gca.cards)

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CEO of the GCA, Amanda Fergusson, wrote to Business Secretary Alok Sharma on Friday urging the Government to allow specialist card retailers to reopen during this lockdown.

“We believe that greeting cards are an essential product, more so now than ever before, providing a meaningful way for people to communicate with those they care about, at a time when they are not able to meet in person,” says Amanda. “We have seen a huge upturn in general card sending this year as people keep in touch with loved ones, the receiving of greeting cards have been proven to stave off the feeling of loneliness and improve mental health, vitally important in today’s climate.

“Therefore, the retailers who specialise in their sale should have ‘essential retailer’ status. While greeting cards are available from the some of the retailers deemed as ‘essential’ by the latest rulings, by their nature they are generalists and do not offer the selection that a specialist card shop can in facilitating these all-important relationships. Being able to find a Christmas card with the appropriate message for your loved ones is especially important this year with many not able to be with loved ones – people will continue to buy cards so allowing card shops to open will allow shoppers to spread out and shop safely. Our members have worked hard at making their premises Covid-safe.”



““Christmas cards are so important for everyone’s morale. We have heard a lot in the press about loneliness and isolation, receiving a card benefits mental health - illustrated by the Royal Mail survey in 2016 <https://www.thinkingofyouweek.cards/238-2/>”

*Some key facts about the greetings card industry*

- British spent £1.7 billion on greeting cards in 2019, according to the Greeting Card Association's annual report
- The British send nearly 1 billion Christmas cards each year. And we are spending more on cards for close family and friends
- The British send more cards per person than any other nation
- Greeting cards is a leading British Creative industry; we lead the world in innovative design and export our cards all over the world
- Cards are a good tangible way of keeping in touch, and mean more than a social mediessage which are sent all the time
- 18-34 year olds are sending more cards than a generation ago. This is trend is also being seen in USA - 44m more cards between 2017 and 2018 were sent by Millennial's according to the USPS
- We know the mental health benefit of receiving a greeting card, illustrated by the Royal Mail survey in 2016, and believe at this time of year more than any people should have the opportunity to visit their local card shops and chose Christmas cards to send to their friends
- During WW2 the government declared greeting cards essential to the war effort following the important part they had played in building morale during WW1 benefit they had
- The industry holds an annual event in September, Thinking of You Week, which is now in its 7th year. It's a time when people are encouraged to send greetings cards to different people during the week

