

COVID-19 statement from the AEV, AEO and ESSA

Since the virus first emerged as a potential public health threat in January, we, along with our sister associations the AEV and AEO, have been supporting our members in a number of ways, including representing members to government and agencies at the highest level, to help ensure business continuity for our members and the industry at large.

From the onset, association members have been able to share knowledge and information in real time, sharing concerns and potential solutions, as well as accessing the most current and authoritative information from numerous official bodies and agencies.

In addition, our three associations have also been relaying member and industry concerns to the government, emphasising that whilst the industry is committed to public safety, we are facing unprecedented challenges in reassuring customers that events are still happening and are safe to attend according to the current advice from the Chief Medical Officer and other authorities.

We support the government's efforts to contain and control the virus and we have been advising members to implement business continuity plans incorporating advice from the most reliable and trustworthy sources, including the WHO, FCO, DHSC and others.

We welcome the significant work undertaken by the government to date, to provide reassurance, including the creation of the Coronavirus Action Plan. However, members of all three associations are already encountering businesses who are implementing travel bans, and customers who are deciding to delay or reverse their attendance decisions, in anticipation of events being cancelled.

We are specifically seeking support from the UK Government to help reassure our customers, as we enter a critical time in the spring show season. We are seeking some positive public messaging in line with current advice from the Chief Medical Officer, outlining that people should remain confident in attending organised events, and there are no greater risks associated with attending events than any other significant gathering of people, such as public transport. This advice reflects private messaging received by the industry from the Chief Medical Officer.

As well as engaging in existing meetings and groups we have written to the Prime Minister, Minister for Tourism, Business Secretary and Secretary of State for International Trade, seeking support and meetings at the highest level to provide more information, and elaborate on our industry's challenges.

This is having profound and serious consequences for our industry, and we are determined to support and assist our members in meeting this fast-moving challenge, at what is a busy time of year for the whole event industry.