

The live events and music industry will work with the Government on COVID-status certification to support full reopening and sector recovery.

The live events and music industry which includes exhibitions; conferences; music arenas; festivals; theatres and indoor sporting events, welcomes the establishment of the Events Research Programme and the safe return of live events as part of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown.

The industry is committed to working with the Government to ensure a swift delivery of the Event Research Programme's pilot events and stands ready to establish protocols based upon the information and guidance they provide.

Under the current roadmap, the live events and music industry can plan for the return of some indoor business and music events from 17 May. These will follow social distancing guidelines and have attendance capped to the lower of 1,000 people or 50% of capacity indoors, 4,000 or 50% capacity outdoors and 10,000 or 25% capacity if seated outdoors. However, given the economic threshold for most business and music events is around 80% of maximum capacity, activities under these limits will be far from sufficient to end the sector's financial crisis. This will also continue to have grave economic impacts on sectors that every live event supports, including but not limited to, hospitality, production, transport and logistics.

The Government's reviews announced in the roadmap (COVID-status certification, social distancing, and the Events Research Programme) will explore different access control measures that businesses could be legally required to introduce. One that continues to be hotly debated in the press is the introduction of COVID-status certification. Not to be confused with the term 'vaccination passports', the simple premise is to reduce the likelihood of people who may be infected from attending events and ensure the safety of other attendees and event staff. This would be managed by ensuring that all attendees are either vaccinated OR have natural immunity OR have a negative COVID test within a set period of time prior to arrival. COVID tests are now available free of charge to all UK adults. The intention of COVID-status certification is to find a non-discriminatory solution that is safe, simple, protects privacy and doesn't cause unnecessary delays or a poor experience for visitors.

The industry welcomes that the Events Research Programme is considering whether COVID-certification can be used as an enabler of all event types to return to capacity audiences, without masks or social distancing. We would support a blanket, industry-wide introduction of COVID-status certification on a temporary basis, to permit the full relaxation of capacity limits from 21 June, Stage Four of the Government's roadmap. Implementation would be subject to the provision of clear and timely guidance from the Government, it being simple to understand and be of little cost to businesses. We would expect that any certification is imposed fairly across the economy, reviewed regularly, and removed when it is safe to do so.

The introduction of COVID-status certificates as a temporary measure could be a pragmatic solution that would enable events to resume at commercially viable attendance levels and will also give further confidence to customers that events are safe to attend.

We recognise there are many issues to be addressed including how the technology would work, its viability for use at a range of different events and related data protection issues, for both the attendees and the organisers. The industry is committed to working at speed with the Government to help address these issues over the coming weeks as part of its considerations. It is essential that the industry has visibility and certainty as soon as possible on the form this government guidance will take so that it is able to plan effectively. This is particularly important given many major live music and business events are planned from late June and onwards and the sector typically requires a lead time of anywhere between three to six months to successfully stage large scale, organised meetings, events and performances.

The live events and music industry is confident that if the introduction of a robust COVID-status certification programme is recommended by the Government to enable the full reopening of capacity events, together with other calibrated, evidence-based mitigation measures, it would provide safe environments for all visitors, staff and audiences. The industry is more than capable of implementing additional health and safety practices; working with the Government, this can be done if all parties take a timely and transparent approach.

Live events are a part of our nation's DNA, enriching our culture and commerce, boosting the economy by over £70 billion per year. It is time for their return. We look forward to working with the Government in resuming live events in a safe and sustainable manner and ensuring their role in contributing to both the economic success and cultural wealth of the UK returns.

Signed,

Exhibition and Conferences

Agribriefing

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Clarion Events Russell Wilcox, Chief Executive Officer	Manchester Central Shaun Hinds, Chief Executive Officer	Reed Exhibitions UK Anna Dycheva-Smirnova, Chief Executive Officer
CloserStill Media Philip Soar, Executive Chairman	Manufacturing Technologies Association (MTA) James Selka, Chief Executive Officer	SEC Peter Duthie, Chief Executive Officer
Events Industry Alliance (EIA) Lou Kiwanuka, Chair	Media 10 Lee Newton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer	Tarsus Group PLC Douglas Emslie, Chief Executive Officer
Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA) Andrew Harrison, Director	Meetings Industry Association Jane Longhurst, Chief Executive	William Reed Andrew Reed, Managing Director, Events & Exhibitions
ExCeL London Jeremy Rees, Chief Executive Officer	Montgomery Damion Angus, Managing Director	
Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre Gareth Rogers, Chief Executive Officer	NCC Events John Lally, Chief Executive Officer	

Music, Ticketing, Theatre and Comedy

AEG Europe John Langford, Chief Operating Officer	LIVE (Live Music Industry Venues and Entertainment) Greg Parmley, Chief Executive Officer	Really Useful Group Jessica Koravos, President
AEG Presents UK Steve Homer, Co-CEO	Marshall Arts Barrie Marshall MBE/ Doris Dixon, Chairman/Director	Royal Albert Hall Lucy Noble, Artistic and Commercial Director
ASM UK John Sharkey, Executive Vice President for Europe <i>On behalf of: AO Arena Manchester, Bonus Arena, First Direct Arena, P&J Live, The SSE Arena, Wembley, Utilita Arena Newcastle.</i>	Mick Perrin Worldwide Mick Perrin, Managing Director	See Tickets Rob Wilmshurst, Chief Executive Officer

Association for Electronic Music Greg Marshall, General Manager	Music Managers Forum Annabella Coldrick, Chief Executive Officer	Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR) Jonathan Brown, Chief Executive Officer
Association of Festival Organisers Steve Heap, General Secretary	Music Venue Trust Mark Davyd, Chief Executive Officer	The Entertainment Agents Association Tarquin Shaw-Young, Chair
Association of Independent Festivals Paul Reed, Chief Operating Officer	National Arenas Association (NAA) Lucy Noble, Chair	The O2 Steve Sayer, VP & General Manager
British Association of Concert Halls Kevin Appleby, Chair	Nottingham Arena Martin Ingham, Chief Executive Officer	The SSE Hydro Debbie McWilliams, Director of Live Entertainment
Concert Promoters Association (CPA) Phil Bowdery, Chair	Phil McIntyre Entertainment Phil McIntyre/Paul Roberts, Owner/MD	Ticketmaster UK Andrew Parsons, Managing Director
Featured Artists Coalition David Martin, General Manager	Production Services Association Dave Keighley, Chair	#WeMakeEvents Duncan Bell, Steering Committee Lead
Kilimanjaro Live Group Stuart Galbraith, CEO	Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA) Peter Heath, Managing Director	

Indoor Sports

Badminton England Adrian Christy, Chief Executive Officer	Grandstand Group Emma Wardell, Event Director	Queensberry Promotions Frank Warren, Founder
British Athletics Ryan Murphy, Commercial Director	Matchroom Sport Eddie Hearn/ Frank Smith, MD Matchroom Sport/CEO Matchroom Boxing	
ESL UK James Dean, Chief Executive Officer	PDC Matthew Porter, Chief Executive Officer	