

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

Rupert Levy, Group Finance Director

Harrogate Convention Centre

Paula Lorimer, Director

NEC Group

Paul Thandi CBE, Chief Executive Officer

Association of Event Organisers (AEO)

Chris Skeith, Chief Executive Officer

Hyve Group PLC

Mark Shashoua, Chief Executive Officer

Nineteen Group

Peter Jones, Chief Executive Officer

Association of Event Venues (AEV)

Rachel Parker, Director

Immediate Live

Paul Byrom, Managing Director

Olympia London

Nigel Nathan, Managing Director

Business Design Centre

Dominic Jones, Chief Executive Officer

Clarion Events

Russell Wilcox, Chief Executive Officer

CloserStill Media

Philip Soar, Executive Chairman

Events Industry Alliance (EIA)

Lou Kiwanuka, Chair

Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA)

Andrew Harrison, Director

ExCeL London

Jeremy Rees, Chief Executive Officer

Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre

Gareth Rogers, Chief Executive Officer

Informa Markets

Mark Temple-Smith, Chief Operating Officer

Manchester Central

Shaun Hinds, Chief Executive Officer

Manufacturing Technologies Association (MTA)

James Selka, Chief Executive Officer

Media 10

Lee Newton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer

Meetings Industry Association

Jane Longhurst, Chief Executive

Montgomery

Damion Angus, Managing Director

NCC Events

John Lally, Chief Executive Officer

P&J Live

Nick Waight, Managing Director

Reed Exhibitions UK

Anna Dycheva-Smirnova, Chief Executive Officer

SEC

Peter Duthie, Chief Executive Officer

Tarsus Group PLC

Douglas Emslie, Chief Executive Officer

William Reed

Andrew Reed, Managing Director, Events & Exhibitions

Music, Ticketing, Theatre and Comedy

AEG Europe

John Langford, Chief Operating Officer

AEG Presents UK

Steve Homer, Co-CEO

ASM UK

John Sharkey, Executive Vice President for Europe

On behalf of: AO Arena Manchester, Bonus Arena, First Direct Arena, P&J Live, The SSE Arena, Wembley, Utilita Arena Newcastle.

LIVE (Live Music Industry Venues and Entertainment)

Greg Parmley, Chief Executive Officer

Marshall Arts

Barrie Marshall MBE/ Doris Dixon, Chairman/Director

Mick Perrin Worldwide

Mick Perrin, Managing Director

Really Useful Group

Jessica Koravos, President

Royal Albert Hall

Lucy Noble, Artistic and Commercial 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