



Event Industry Alliance  
119 High Street  
Berkhamsted  
HP4 2DJ

16<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AB

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
11 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AB

Dear Prime Minister, Dear Chancellor,

#### **Request for a firm go date for Business Events**

Firstly, we wish to congratulate you on hosting the G7 Summit in Cornwall over the weekend. This was a great example of the power, impact and criticality of events in driving change, formulating strategy and developing fundamental relationships – on a global scale. What's more, it demonstrated that business events can be delivered safely and successfully.

As we have communicated previously, business Events, trade and consumer exhibitions in the UK have always delivered business, economic and societal benefits on this scale, making a significant and direct contribution to UK Plc: supporting 180,000 businesses relying on exhibitions to trade, 114,000 jobs, supporting the travel, tourism and hospitality sector with £11bn of economic impact, and we estimate, driving some £70bn of trade into UK businesses. If we look to the wider events sector, to include meetings, conferences, festivals, music and cultural events we see some 700,000 jobs and £70bn of economic impact generated each year.

We fully appreciate the delicate balance of protecting public health with the urgent need to re-open business sectors and support the principles of the roadmap to recovery. However, the delay to Step 4 was a hammer blow for the events sector. Event organisations have been forced into further postponement, or worse, cancellation, resulting in even greater pressure to survive. Due to the cyclical nature of events calendars, several organisers will not have delivered their core product for 4 years.

Whilst the Chancellor has presented a raft of support measures, none were specific to the Business Events sector. This, coupled with uncertainty in relation to a full re-opening for the sector, has led to over 50% of permanent and 83% of the freelance workforce losing their jobs. We estimate this has cost the Treasury some £152m to date in lost tax and National Insurance contributions. In the meantime, we have a collective of capable, passionate staff on furlough and desperately wanting to get back to work which, in turn, would ease the pressure further on Treasury.

Working collaboratively with government departments, our sector has seized the opportunity to run our own pilot events in September 2020 and assist with the Event Research Programme in an effort to do all we can to provide both evidence and reassurance that events can happen safely, in a controlled way, flexing to the requirements of a series of mitigating measures. All events were delivered; some in the midst of the pandemic with a Tier system in operation and latterly under Step 3. The pilot events delivered as part of the Events Research Programme have been a huge success, with phase 1 pilots delivering 83,000 attendees with media reporting us 'safer than shopping centres', demonstrating that the sector can viably get back to business safely (with proportionate mitigations in place) and, importantly, without capacity limits which are crippling the sector's ability to deliver at scale which in turn will drive

economic recovery for the UK. Unlike other sectors which need the widescale removal of mitigations to be viable, we have already indicated our willingness and ability to operate with Covid certification status – in the short term – if it allows the sector to resume fully.

Our international competitors have supported their business events sectors in numerous ways; financially by supporting both businesses and customers with grants, strategically by identifying business events as organised gatherings, and exempting business travelers from general travel restrictions and politically with measures to build customer confidence including government backed insurance & strong advocacy from officials. If we don't act now, we will face irreparable damage to our reputation as a world-class events destination and our ability to compete on a global scale will be severely impacted.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that in your review on 5<sup>th</sup> July, you are able to provide a firm go date for the events sector.

Whilst as an industry we pride ourselves on agility and responsiveness, we need time to build our events, to allow businesses to plan and invest with confidence and without fear that further postponement or cancellation is a real threat.

By working closely with your officials, we have unequivocally demonstrated our ability to deliver events of capacity safely and effectively with the mitigations currently required in place. We are ready, willing and able to embrace these mitigations, should they be needed in the short-term, to allow this crucial sector of the UK's economy to get back to doing what it does best; generating investment and economic impact, supporting jobs and bringing people back together to do business.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Harrison,  
Director,  
Event Supplier and Services Association



Rachel Parker,  
Director,  
Association of Event Venues



Chris Skeith OBE,  
CEO,  
Association of Event Organisers

CC:

Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
Lord Grimston, Minister for Investment for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport  
Nigel Huddleston, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
Theresa Villiers, Chair, APPG for Events

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