



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport

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George Howarth  
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Dear George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 26 June, to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, on behalf of your constituents, regarding support for grassroots music venues and the creative industry sector. I am responding as the minister responsible for this policy area.

The government recognises the huge contribution the arts and cultural sector makes, not only to the economy and international reputation of the United Kingdom, but also to the wellbeing and enrichment of its people.

We appreciate that this is an incredibly challenging time and that there are many cultural organisations and professionals who are currently facing difficult and uncertain circumstances. We are very alert to this issue, and are working to find solutions that support this vital sector as the lockdown eases.

The Prime Minister has made clear that a review of social distancing measures will take place later in the autumn, depending on where we are with the pandemic.

The Secretary of State recently revealed a five stage roadmap that the government will work through to get the performing arts sectors back up and running as soon as possible:

- Stage One - Rehearsal and training (no audiences)
- Stage Two - Performances for broadcast and recording purposes
- Stage Three - Performances outdoors with an audience and pilots for indoor performances with a limited socially-distanced audience
- Stage Four - Performances allowed indoors and outdoors (but with a limited socially-distanced audience indoors)
- Stage Five - Performances allowed indoors / outdoors (with a fuller audience indoors)

On 9 July we published guidance for people who work in performing arts, including arts organisations, venue operators and participants which will help people understand how they can work and take part in the performing arts safely, and keep their audiences safe.

The guidance, which can be found [here](#), follows the government's five-stage roadmap outlining how we will get audiences back into performing arts venues. From 11 July we can all enjoy performances outdoors with social distancing. As you may well be aware, on the 31st July, the Prime Minister announced that the government is delaying the changes that had been proposed in the roadmap for 1 August until at least 15 August, which would have allowed



indoor performances with socially distanced audiences. Any further steps to continue to open up the economy will be dependent on the state of the epidemic at the time and the trajectory of cases being stable or remaining in decline.

This guidance applies to those who engage in activities in the performing arts including but not limited to performers (actors, singers, dancers, musicians, other performers), coaches, support workers, choreographers, costume designers, set builders, accompanists, directors, stage managers and other creative, technical and operational production team members; and to the premises and venues in which performing arts activities take place. It applies to training, rehearsal and pre-production activities, and performances which take place with or without a live audience, wherever these activities occur. It provides advice on all aspects of performance, from casting, sound and lighting, costume and fitting, to cloakrooms, orchestra pits, hair and make-up.

It is also of vital importance to me and the work of the department that we are able to continue to support and celebrate the work of music industry, who are so vital to the cultural life of the nation and the communities they work within. This is why, on 5 July, alongside earlier government support, we announced a major £1.57 billion package for arts organisations across the publicly-funded and non-publicly funded sectors.

These funds will protect cultural assets of international, national and local importance, including supporting the levelling up agenda by preventing the loss of valuable cultural fabric from our towns and regions. The Fund will cover charitable and private organisations of all sizes in the arts, museums, heritage sectors as well as music venues, festivals and independent cinemas.

On 29 July, the government announced further details and launched the application process for the Grants programme for the Cultural Recovery Fund. Arts Council England, British Film Institute, Heritage England and National Lottery Heritage Fund will be considering applications for grant funding against agreed criteria, as set out in the published guidance. Guidance from Arts Council England can be found here: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/CRFgrants>

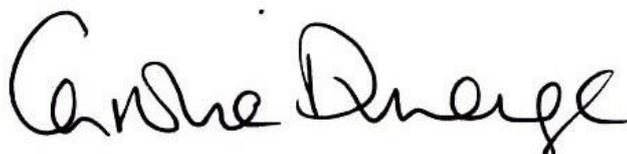
Please note the deadline for Round 1 is the 21st August and Round 2, the 4th September.

Key organisations in England will be able to apply for grants or loans, with loans being offered on generous terms, with low rates, an up-front repayment holiday, and long payback period. In order to receive support, organisations will need to demonstrate that they are at risk in this financial year and have done all they can to exhaust other options. We will be prioritising institutions of national and international significance and those that are crucial to levelling up places, communities, and economic growth across the country.

In addition to this, the government announced earlier this month that VAT, which is usually charged at 20% on the tourism and hospitality industry, will be cut to 5% until 12 January 2021. Among other attractions, this VAT cut will apply to tickets to theatres, shows and concerts.

I hope your constituents and yourself find this information useful.

With best wishes,



Caroline Dinenage MP  
**Minister of State for Digital and Culture**

