



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
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Dear George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 2 July, 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 theatres 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.

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 regional theatres, 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.

Culture and Heritage are at the heart of communities across the country, enriching the lives of millions, and this financial investment is testament to the role this sector plays in our lives. The fund will protect cultural assets of international, national and regional importance, including supporting the levelling up agenda by preventing the loss of valuable cultural fabric from our towns and regions. This fund will support organisations through to the Spring of 2021.

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.

Grant funding will be delivered through Arts Council England, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the British Film Institute to support cultural organisations at risk, including



arts organisations across the publicly-funded and non-publicly funded sectors, museums and heritage organisations, music venues and independent cinemas. We are currently working on the criteria for eligibility and will make a further announcement on this shortly. Further information can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions>.

As you will know, in March, the government implemented an unprecedented package to support businesses, charitable organisations, workers and the self-employed through the Coronavirus crisis. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and business rates relief in particular are providing support to organisations across the arts sector. CBILS for example, has made it easier for SMEs with a turnover of up to £45 million to access vital financial support during these difficult times.

The extension of the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) was announced in May, which has been extended to the end of July, with more flexibility being introduced from August to October.

The [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme](#) has also been extended with applications opening in August for a second and final grant. The grant will operate in the same way as the existing scheme with self-employed workers eligible for a single payment covering three months, at a level of 70% of average monthly earnings up to a maximum of £6,570 (i.e. down from 80% and a maximum of £7,500).

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. We have now moved to Stage Three, which means that we can all enjoy performances outdoors with social distancing and we are working hard to get indoor audiences back as soon as we safely can. From 1 August, indoor performances to a live audience can restart, subject to the success of pilots.

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.

Where relevant, this guidance should be read alongside the specific guidance relevant to particular settings. In particular, learning professionals in the performing arts should look at guidance for [schools](#) and [out-of-school settings](#).

I hope your constituents and yourself find this information useful.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Dinenage', written in a cursive style.

Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture