



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

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Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP
theresa@theresavilliers.co.uk

Dear Theresa,

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 February to both the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Victoria Prentis MP and myself, regarding the impact of COVID-19 and related restrictions on agricultural shows.

We recognise that COVID-19 and related restrictions continue to severely impact the outdoor events sector. I am fully aware of how difficult the past twelve months have been for the sector, including agricultural shows.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) leads on the government's COVID-19 Secure [guidance for the Visitor Economy](#), which covers organised outdoor events including agricultural shows. My department also leads on the reopening of the outdoor events sector. My department remains in contact with a number of outdoor events stakeholders via the Event and Entertainment Working Group, the Events Industry Senior Leaders Panel, and through direct engagement with the Events Industry Forum who have co-produced guidance with DCMS for outdoor events such as agricultural shows. My officials along with the DCMS Chief Scientific Adviser have also met with representatives from the outdoor events sector to discuss the scientific rationale behind the government's decisions on reopening. These meetings have included the Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations, with whom we will continue to engage as we plan ahead for reopening the sector and supporting its recovery.

We will continue to work across government, including with DEFRA, to assess how we can most effectively support agricultural events and rural tourism's recovery from the pandemic.

The government continues to support outdoor events businesses and individuals during this period - including through the extension of various government-backed loans, new grants and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes. I have detailed below the various grant schemes which agricultural event businesses may be eligible for.

Firstly, through the Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes, businesses which are legally required to close due to the new restrictions will receive up to £3,000 per month.

Secondly, many eligible businesses in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors which are not required to close but which have suffered from reduced demand due to local restrictions will receive grants through the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) scheme, with funding of up to £2,100 per 28 days. Local authorities are best placed to determine local



needs for supporting recovery, and whilst the government has set suggested criteria for this funding, local authorities will be allowed to determine exactly which businesses to support.

The government has also announced [top up grants](#) for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the spring. This is in addition to the monthly Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed).

Further to this, we have given local authorities in England an additional £594 million discretionary funding to support their local businesses. This builds on the £1.1 billion discretionary funding which local authorities in England have already received to support their local economies and help businesses impacted.

Local authorities can determine how much funding to provide to businesses through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme, and exactly which businesses to target. The guidance for ARG funding encourages local authorities to develop discretionary grant schemes to help those businesses which - while not legally forced to close - are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions put in place to control the spread of COVID-19. This could include - for example - businesses which supply the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors, or businesses in the events sector.

It is up to each local authority to determine eligibility for the ARG based on their assessment of local economic need; however, we encourage local authorities to support businesses which have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, but which are ineligible for the other grant schemes.

Businesses and individuals should check [here](#) to explore the full range of support measures available to them.

Whilst outdoor events are not currently able to proceed due to the national restrictions, my department looks forward to working across government and with local authorities, Public Health England and the sector itself to get outdoor events running safely and successfully once they are permitted.

Thank you again for your letter.



Nigel Huddleston MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Sport, Tourism and Heritage