



Rt. Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
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Tuesday 6th July 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to congratulate you, on behalf of the Business Visits & Events Partnership, on your new role in Government and to welcome your arrival at the Department for Health and Social Care.

The Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP) is the official umbrella body representing organisations involved in the world leading UK Events industry, a sector which, prior to the pandemic, had a value of over £70 billion and a talented and skilled workforce of over 700,000. At this time of unparalleled challenge for the economy, health and well-being of the nation, we are confident that your extensive experience in previously leading other key departments will enable us to work together to rebuild this vital sector, use it to help renew the country and to deliver on your governments ambitious agenda.

As you may be aware, despite not being able to fully operate since March 2020, many organisations and individuals across our diverse industry have been providing critical support to the country over the last 16 months – including supplying infrastructure and logistical support for the Nightingale Hospitals, staffing Vaccination Centres and to working with officials from across government departments to design and deliver Covid secure protocols and guidance for events of all kinds. This is an industry where its people have been, and continue to be, committed to doing good for all, despite not always being recognised for their efforts and contributions.

We are very confident that your experience at both DCMS and the Treasury will make you very aware of the role that events play in supporting the UK economy, the employment it provides to many thousands of highly experienced, skilled and creative people across the whole of the UK, and the role events of all types will play in rebuilding local communities across the four nations of the UK. Indeed, as you wrote in the foreword of the 2015 Business Visits and Events Strategy paper, “The UK is a world leader in the events industry.” You also quite rightly identified that, “There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the support that Government can and should provide. We need to take a tailored approach.” This unfortunately has never been truer.

Unlike many other industries we have been unable to operate fully since the first lockdown last year and the delay in lifting restrictions since June is estimated to have cost £5bn in lost spend in the last month alone. As a result, we have worked extraordinarily hard to put our case for additional tailored support to officials and ministers. There has been some help for the cultural sector through the Cultural Relief Fund, but the damage to confidence by the latest delay has had a devastating impact, particularly on the business events sector, live music and festivals and many planned outdoor events.

One of the learnings from this dreadful period for our country, is that collaboration across all departments is crucial if we are to achieve the shared goals and vision for our country. This is where we seek your support, and that of your colleagues across Cabinet, as we move forward. We have identified the critical role that public health officials across the UK will be playing as we begin to return to delivering events, not just here in the UK, but overseas. For many of them this will be the first time they have had to work with event organisers, promoters and producers and we are already seeing indications of the lack of understanding and the resulting strain that this is causing as we plan a safe and secure return.

We are very confident that as an industry we are fit, safe and competent to operate – in fact more secure than many other business environments which have been open for some considerable time. The expertise we have in risk assessment for events is part of our DNA, which is why we are prepared, if necessary, to open with some restrictions and protocols in place. Equally as the government looks ahead to managing covid as part of a return to normality we are, as a sector, very able to adapt mitigations and protocols to create covid safe environments which would enable events of all kinds to continue. This will be especially crucial to the continuing survival and recovery of the sector, given the entire industry relies on long term planning and resilient customer confidence.

We have been very clear with your colleagues at DCMS about the other issues required to provide further tailored support to a sector that is still hurting, but hope that with your understanding of the critical role that events play in the broader economy and the positive impact on wellbeing and mental health that bringing people together will also have as part of the recovery phase means that we can engage with your department and officials in a positive and constructive manner to deliver real benefits across the UK.

We wish you and your team every success and are fully committed to continuing to work with you and your colleagues across government to help deliver a future the people of our country now deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Hughes
Chair
Business Visits & Events Partnership

cc Rt. Hon Oliver Dowden MP, Secretary of State, DCMS