



## Events Industry Briefing Note

### Introduction

Since early March this year, the Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP) has been coordinating the events industry's collective voice to government leading up to and during the COVID:19 pandemic. Along with the BVEP's 26 member and supporting organisations, the BVEP has been acting alongside other government agencies and departments and working directly with its main sponsoring department, DCMS. Representatives from DCMS are attending all of the meetings and hearing directly from industry trade and representative organisations.

This work carried out by the BVEP and its partners has covered four key areas;

1. Coordinating information on the current and ongoing effect COVID:19 has been having on the UK events sector, including completing a number of surveys, and ensuring that information is shared directly with government.
2. Ensuring that all organisations across the UK events sector are fully aware of what support programmes are available to them and providing further feedback to government on the effectiveness of those programmes.
3. Having regular online meetings with the industry, including fortnightly partner meetings, along with weekly meetings with DCMS officials and Ministers, where appropriate, and sharing a summary of all weekly activity with all partner trade associations.
4. Working closely with DCMS to develop a sustainable programme of recovery for the UK events sector.

## Overview of key activities

Specifically, during this time, the BVEP and its partners have;

- Attended all of the governments TIER (Tourism Industry Emergency Response Group) meetings, which take place on a weekly basis, and those convened by The Tourism Industry Council, which is chaired directly by the Minister of Tourism, and the Tourism Alliance.
- Providing detailed and credible evidence to support claims that government support on offer to business is either not getting through or is inadequate for the event industry.
- Created a supplier survey with the EIF and PSA which showed that 60% only had liquidity for up to 3 months, and which was shared directly with DCMS and officials at the Treasury.
- Called for hard evidence to be fed into DCMS via TIER that the CIBLS loan scheme funds are not getting through fast enough or lending criteria is prohibitive and terms onerous.
- Raised the issue of insurance, which has now resulted in The Financial Conduct Authority establishing a unit to deal with disputes. This comes after Industry concerns that Insurance Companies were failing to recognise claims.
- Coordinated a Business Events Recovery Sentiment Survey, in partnership between BVEP and davies tanner, to assist in forward recovery planning, the results of which have been shared directly with VisitBritain and DCMS.
- Provided input into the DCMS Select Committee inquiry into impact of Covid-19 on all sectors with BVEP urging all partners to contribute and collating key responses.
- Developed an extensive report, entitled the UK Events Report, which will be published at the end of April, and serve as a marker for the essential role that events of all types and description play in our society and economy.
- Successfully lobbied DCMS to provide further clarification on business rates relief & small business grants, with the LGA revising its guidance to specifically include conference and event venues.
- Been working directly with VisitBritain on four recovery streams of work on the implications for people; timelines, regulations and future proofing, with event Industry representatives on each of the panels.

- Continued to lobby to provide additional support and highlight specific issues relating to the event industry, particularly around inconsistencies in guidance for event supply companies.
- Made representatives available for interview and comment in both industry specific and national media, along with providing regular updates and content on behalf of the sector.
- Worked with partners and key stakeholders to examine potential COVID:19 exit strategies from global markets to assist with modelling approaches in UK.
- Requested that all that support programmes for the Industry should last through the lockdown period and until business recovery is well underway.
- As a key member of the UK Events Industry Board, have been meeting regularly to consider the adequacy of current government support and an outline paper on a recovery plan. The Board is due to meet again on the 14<sup>th</sup> May.
- Joined the BEIS Business Engagement Forum to review workplace safety in line with public health requirements. Nominated two representatives from the business and leisure events sectors to sit on working level groups.
- Worked directly with DCMS officials to support the planning for the end of lockdown, including;
  - Advance notice of end of lockdown for events to enable adequate pre-planning.
  - Scenario modelling to assess practicality and viability of operating models.
  - Enabling Industry sectors to offer their own innovative operational proposals for social distancing and public health provisions.
  - Extending support programmes until business recovery is evident.
- Engaged fully with DCMS and other government officials on an industry specific Recovery Package, which could include targeted marketing plans, support programmes, tax incentives and other forms of subvention or assistance to stimulate the sector.
- Very importantly, promoted the concept of ORGANISED EVENTS against MASS GATHERINGS to emphasise that conferences, exhibition and cultural events can manage attendee flows, track and trace attendees and respond to public health requirements far more quickly than other large UNORGANISED gatherings could do.