

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

28 September 2020

Dear Chancellor

The world-renowned event industry in the UK, until the outbreak of the pandemic, was a thriving growth sector of the economy supporting thousands of jobs in venues, organisers and the wider supply chain. The 2020 UK Event Report highlighted a direct spend of £70bn in 2019.

Events are also vital to the social fabric of our country. Sport, live music, entertainment, conferences, exhibitions and cultural events all play a significant role in the general wellbeing of the population, lifting national morale.

The stark reality is that many organisations, with no current revenue, an ongoing cost base and no visibility of a timeline in which this position will change, are facing imminent financial failure.

This will result in the loss of a huge number of jobs, which otherwise would be viable once the sector is once again able to operate, together with the related high-quality skills and talent.

The timescale involved in staging events of scale is such that even once events can be staged safely and viably, the recovery, particularly for those with an international component, will take significant time.

For all these reasons it is imperative that we find a way to support organisations and the supply chain to survive through the coming months.

The measures announced last week will certainly benefit those sectors that are able to operate with reduced demand or restricted capacity but will not address the challenges in the event sector which is being precluded from operating at all.

The event industry has significant demonstrable experience in providing safe and healthy events and has developed ways in which event presentation can address COVID-19 related issues. A significant amount of collaboration and innovation continues to take place through various national and international industry bodies and sharing of best practice. This has been demonstrated through pilot events but even this activity has now been stopped. We will continue to work with the Scottish and UK Governments towards the resumption of activity.

Whilst some larger companies may be able to find a way through this crisis a disproportionately high number of event businesses are small, particularly in the technical supply chain, and their loss would be devastating to the industry as a whole.



These businesses have no income with which to pay any proportion of wages and therefore require an alternative means of support. I'm sure it was not your intention that the event sector would be excluded in this way.

I would urge you as a priority to take action now with measures to address this issue, before the Job Retention Scheme ends, as the alternative will be decimation of a sector in which the UK is genuinely world class.

I appreciate the considerable demands on your time but would be very happy to meet you (virtually) or others from your office to discuss not only the particular impacts on the event sector, but more importantly the role the event sector can play in a national recovery in terms of both the UK economy and public morale.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Peter G. Duthie'.

Peter Duthie
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cc Oliver Dowden MP
Alok Sharma MP
Alison Thewliss MP
Anneliese Dodds MP
Fiona Hyslop MSP