

#MUSIC UNITES THE KINGDOM

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

MUSICIANS' MOVEMENT

Uniting to lobby for positive change.

**TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DIGITAL, MEDIA, CULTURE AND SPORT (DCMS);
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND, WALES, NORTHERN IRELAND AND CREATIVE SCOTLAND.**

Despite the much needed £1.57 billion support package for the arts sector, both local communities and freelance performers are being left behind. The announcement of Arts Council England's £500m Cultural Recovery Fund along with similar schemes across the UK is welcome news, but whilst the package will help to protect our national treasures and their employees over the next few months of turmoil, it will not reach the freelancers who form the core of our world-renowned music industry. As a result, the general public, who actively engage, learn and thrive through their interaction with the UK's live musical sector, are also being left behind. **We will not accept a country without live music, particularly at this time of national crisis. Musicians need to get back to work.**

Whilst musicians are unable to perform, the general public are not able to access live music, but instead are growing accustomed to receiving content online and for free. The current package of measures leaves our national culture mothballed, and offers extremely little support for the freelance performers who form the core of its musical identity. Current government guidelines on social distancing and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport spending allocations prohibit venues and promoters from offering reduced-capacity events in a way that is commercially viable for the foreseeable future. Without access to additional and significant investment, as well as clear guidelines on indoor performances, many of those who make the music that reaches the hearts of millions of people across Britain will be forced to leave the profession forever. **This will leave the UK's cultural sector permanently scarred, and we fear that irreversible damage to one of our most precious national assets has already begun.**

The musical community can be found at every level of national life, from your local pub to the Royal Wedding, the football terraces to the concert hall, and from the festival stage to your favourite film: music is an indispensable part of who we are as a country and a people. **#musicunitesthekingdom.**

Without urgent action, there will be a negative and permanent deterioration in cultural engagement that will impact every region of our country, every age group, and every community. Freelancers form the bulk of our acclaimed musical sector and our standing as one of the world's leading soft powers could also suffer. We simply cannot cancel live music for the foreseeable future: Performances must continue in a safe manner for the benefit of Britain's culture and to keep our industry match-fit for the post-COVID/Brexit world.

Recognising that a one-size-fits-all approach would not respect the vibrant and diverse nature of the UK, we hope that the DCMS, Arts Council England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Creative Scotland can agree in principle that something must be done immediately. We propose that the scheme outlined below be immediately tabled for discussion with the Musicians' Movement, the devolved Arts Councils, the DCMS and other relevant musical organisations.

We look forward to a prompt response,

Warm Regards,

Phil Meadows & Christopher Barrett

Managing Directors // Musicians' Movement

FREELANCE PERFORMERS' SUPPORT SCHEME

WHAT DO WE NEED?

A new grant scheme to enable live music events to take place in line with the COVID-19 social distancing guidelines.

HOW WOULD IT WORK?

Music venues will be able to apply for grants to fund live music events. The grant will cover the difference in income for ticket sales between 100 percent audience capacity and a reduced capacity (for example 25 percent), which is required by the government due to social distancing guidelines. Included in this grant would be a guaranteed fee for performers.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES:

To maximise the impact of the Freelance Performers' Support Scheme, the government should also introduce a cultural exemption on VAT for all tickets in both the commercial and non-commercial sector. The reduction in VAT from 20 percent to 5 percent (until January 12th, 2021) is having an impact, but this needs to be extended and increased to incentivise the public to once again attend indoor live performances.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES?

- Find a realistic pathway out of lockdown for performers and venues in all areas across the UK
- Enable performers to work and earn an income, and prevent an exodus of talent from the cultural sector
- Prevent institutions mothballing until venues reopen in full
- Allow the public to re-connect with performers, venues, and promoters
- Rebuild audience confidence for attending live events
- Keep performers 'match fit' for a post-COVID/Brexit world
- Ensure venues of all sizes can survive the difficulties COVID-19 presents

WHAT ARE THE KEY PRINCIPLES?

- All performances must take place in line with the COVID-19 guidance issued by government guidelines across the UK
- A grant to venues to make up for reduced capacity ticket sales from 100 percent capacity
- A guaranteed fee to performers to make up for reduced capacity ticket sales from 100 percent capacity
- Full payment of grants regardless of last-minute changes in government guidance
- A streamlined grant application system
- Strict adherence to Public Sector Equality Duty obligations and the Equality Act (2010) in line with current approaches already put in place by the devolved administrations
- Fair distribution of grants across the country in line with 'Creative People and Places' for ACE and similar programmes in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland

HOW WOULD THIS BE DELIVERED?

- Distributed by Arts Council England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Creative Scotland
- Cover the difference in income for tickets sales between 100 percent audience capacity and a reduced capacity (for example 25 percent)
- Guaranteed minimum fee paid to each performer
- Fixed rate per ticket in line with a full pre-COVID venue capacity
- Scheme to be updated regularly in response to government guidelines on social distancing
- New money in addition to the £1.57 billion support package for cultural, arts and heritage institutions