



Event Industry Alliance  
119 High Street  
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HP4 2DJ

18th March 2020

The Right Honourable Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
11 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AB

Dear Chancellor,

We write on behalf of the Association of Event Organisers (AEO), Association of Event Venues (AEV), and the Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA), in relation to the immediate and potentially catastrophic business impacts our industry is facing with COVID-19.

Whilst the industry recognises public health should be at the forefront of any response, the lack of specific subsequent support for the events industry is concerning, and is likely to impact on the UK's ability to recover post COVID-19.

To give some idea of the scale of the events industry in the UK, almost 1100 trade and consumer events take place annually, contributing £11bn to the UK economy via the participation of 9.1 million visitors and 178,000 exhibitors, employing well over 100,000 people (20% being International). In addition, of the 84 AEO members, 23 alone organise over 1,000 overseas events from UK headquarters; bringing some £2.1bn turnover into the UK economy, and putting them in the Top 10 Service Exporters.

Since COVID-19 was announced as a pandemic, the industry has come to a complete halt. Organisers, venues, suppliers, and their supply chains have immediate needs and there is a cash flow crisis. To give you some sense of the impact to the economy, holding no exhibitions in April, May and June alone would cost the economy some £3bn. This is a conservative estimate and doesn't include the onward impact to the supply chains of the markets that the events serve.

Whilst the £330bn rescue plan announced yesterday is very welcome, we need specific help to support our businesses and our supply chain, and would like to:

- Confirmation all aspects of both the rescue plan, and the Government's Corona Virus Support Package announced last week will apply to the events industry
- Consider a specific Event Industry Wide Aid package (in line with [Danish State Aid Package](#))
- Business support extended around payment of NI, VAT, Loans, and other repayments for business and individuals

We are an industry that fuels travel, tourism, hotels, restaurants and bars. We ignite business in the markets served by the events we create, which has a knock-on effect on their supply chains across the UK and the World. Globally, in February until mid March, the lost business for industries from cancelled events has been measured at £21bn by UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry. These are orders that haven't been signed, drying out the production of goods and services. For the UK as a global leading trading nation, this has a devastating effect.

We are facing a potentially fatal cashflow catastrophe but, with the right and timely Government support, we believe we may yet be able to make a hugely positive contribution to the UK economy and exports.

Our members would welcome a meeting with you and your officials to provide more information and to elaborate on their challenges at this critical time. We would be available at your convenience.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Chris Skeith,  
CEO,  
Association of Event Organisers



Rachel Parker,  
Director,  
Association of Event Venues



Andrew Harrison,  
Director,  
Event Supplier and Services  
Association

CC: Nigel Huddleston, Minister for Sport, Heritage & Tourism