1. INTRODUCTION

BVEP's strapline is about *connecting the events industry*. This report therefore aims to do this through the subject of professionalisation. A number of meetings, articles and the views of 20 people interviewed for the Professionalisation in Events (PiE) project form the basis for the proposed options and actions. Having been instrumental in earlier discussions, it was felt that the BVEP should take stock of where the ES are in relation to professionalisation and what, if any, action could be facilitated. This decision has been influenced by some recent developments, such as the Trailblazer Event Apprenticeships, but also concern that there has been little change in other areas, such as the Institute of Event Management (IEM). This report provides a brief background to professionalisation in the Events Sector (ES) and the relevant results of the PiE study. Three options for future direction will be given, based upon the evidence to date. These will be followed by recommendations for particular actions that BVEP could encourage their Partners and others to undertake. The premise here is that, although the response was very positive towards the notion of professionalisation, talk has been easy and action limited to a few pockets of activity. If there is little support or alternatives put forward then BVEP will know that this is not a subject that is a priority with which to connect the events industry.

2. BACKGROUND

It is assumed that *professionalisation* is the process of becoming a profession and that *professionalism* is more about the behaviour of those working in a specific area, in this case, the ES. Most industries, at some stage of development, go through the professionalisation discussion and process. For the ES and BVEP, these discussions have predominantly been in the last decade. One of the outcomes was the creation of the Institute of Event Management (IEM). The IEM was set up after discussions at BVEP and under the initiative of Susan Spibey. The motivation for this was anecdotal criticisms of both practice and event degrees. This was a decade ago and, apart from the creation of the IEM as a legal entity in 2012 (see http://iem.institute/ for their terms of reference), there has been limited support to get it established. The main stumbling block appears to be the lack of financial support from either industry or government.

The question for the PiE study was whether there was an appetite for professionalisation itself and whether a professional body was the preferred model. Despite the intentions to discover a more contemporary and resilient model that offered professional status (Jackson 2016), the results of the PiE interviews reflected the characteristics of a traditional model of a profession. They identified that there were specialist skills, knowledge and activities pertinent to Events Management (EM); the need for a way of educating and assessing this knowledge and skills; a code of conduct about the way we behave and do business and one body that brings all of this together, such as a Council or an Institute. So, given that we have an IEM, what did participants believe were the actions that needed to be taken? What were the strengths and weaknesses of existing events education, trade and professional bodies and the IEM?

3. SCOPE

The scope of the interest in this report and the PiE research was the ES in the UK. It is however recognised that there are international professional practices to consider, especially those that operate within UK based chapters e.g. ILEA and MPI. The aim is to use the best knowledge and practices that are deemed applicable to the UK ES. Globalisation and greater mobility of the workforce, despite or because of Brexit, requires that whatever is developed bears in mind the need to work with European and International partners, not just to save effort, but to ensure mobility, recognition and transferability. For example, the Convention Industry Council in the USA has rebranded itself as the Events Industry Council (http://www.eventscouncil.org/index.aspx). Their "goal [is to] ... better represent event management professionals worldwide." An alignment with them may be something that is further explored as the convergence of all that is and supports events come together under an 'event' banner?

The aim of the PiE research was to interview a cross-section of participants from the ES to gain their views on professionalisation (Appendix B). All of those interviewed believe that there is an ES in the UK. This was however qualified with discussion about the unnecessary fragmentation that currently limits the progress of the ES as a whole. It was deemed a disappointment that the separate sub-sectors (e.g. tourism, venues, hospitality, experiential) were "reluctant to see the

bigger picture" or to "move beyond their self-interests". It was accepted that this was the nature of where people sat, especially from an organisational or business perspective.

It was put forward that the professionalisation agenda could be a catalyst to bring people together by developing the core content of a body of knowledge and a curriculum framework that recognised similarities and specialisms. It was seen that the process as well as the outcome would be beneficial. This was something that was achieved through the review of the National Occupational Standards, the creation of the Event Apprenticeship and the review of the Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statements for Events. However, there was limited knowledge of these activities across the ES. It could be that this was because these activities were undertaken by a small group of people, in isolation and with limited engagement when any information was sent out for consultation. The danger is repeating this exercise here, where only a few people are engaged in any agreed action, whilst everybody else gets on with the day job.

4. FINDINGS
4.1 Introduction
The PiE study findings have been summarised in the table in Appendix C. It outlines the themes that emerged from the interviews and puts together the challenges identified with the strengths and opportunities that could address some of these issues. Overall, the consensus was that the ES is progressing and developing well. There was however an underlying frustration that greater successes could be achieved, more quickly, by collaboration. There were a number of core contributing factors identified that are summarised below as the 3Ps.

4.2 Policy
The expectation is that the ES will have to take responsibility and accountability for it's own actions. There is no government funding for such activity and the proposed Industrial Strategy is expecting industry sectors to initiate their own agreements. The process of professionalisation is no different. The BVEP can be the voice of the industry only if existing partners and other interested organisations and companies actively support it. The ES is unlike other services, such as nursing, social care or education where Government has been involved in their professionalisation. These sectors have seen a process of professionalisation, de-professionalisation and now re-professionalisation as it becomes recognised that there are issues around accountability and transparency where a strong independent professional body could balance out profit-making decisions of an increasingly marketised sector. Government does not currently intervene with the operations of the ES but there are aspects of event work that does interest them and the concern is that certain parts of the ES may be targeted, such as crowded places, where regulation could be applied without seeing its significance to the wider ES.

4.3 People
The ES is predominantly a people industry supported by infrastructure and technology. Events are about bringing people together for a particular experience and specific objectives. It is people who are currently the creators, producers and directors of these experiences. It is therefore human capital that has greatest value to the ES. The ES workforce, its human capital, is seen as a driver for future success. The participants in the PiE expressed very clearly the importance of people working in events. They also recognised, personally, the frustrations of their value not being recognised. This was mainly from an external perspective when often the stereotype of their "only being a party planner" was quoted in a demeaning manner. Their stories also reflected the ad hoc way in which they had entered the industry and how they had found their way around and had learnt "on the job" and therefore that might be some reason for the resistance to some aspects of professionalisation.

Professional status tends to focus on those at managerial and above levels; professionalism is concerned about all levels of the workforce, including volunteers and contract staff, acting professionally. So, one question is about whom in the ES is professionalisation including? The Event Apprenticeship scheme has begun at the entry level and the whole process of recruitment, retention, development and progression of people in the industry was identified as an important characteristic of professionalization in the PiE study. The importance of professionalisation was clearly about improvement and development, not control and regulation. Again, the need for the bigger ES picture was reiterated. It was recognized that there is an element of competition in this

area but that because the ES is predominantly made up of SMEs that there is a need for true coopetition, where staff mobility and transferability is seen as positive and not as a leakage. For this to be realised, a larger structure of career progression and attainment is something that needs to be considered across the ES. Not only does the ES as whole, but individuals and organisations gain when a person makes their way from venue, to client, to agency; from music, to sport and then to pharma. This all facilitates the sharing and growth of knowledge and experience that benefits the ES.

4.4 Professional practice
Part of valuing and developing event-specific human capital is to recognise it's worth through a professional structure and reward scheme. It is acknowledged that it is not the only way and that the ES has grown to where it is today without one. The ES is maturing and part of this is about acknowledging that not everyone can be an entrepreneurial leader and that there are certain expectations of knowledge and expertise that can be taught and learnt through education and experience (the 2 Es). There have been a number of initiatives and events that have built up to where we currently stand, including the People 1st presentation at AEME2006 at Bournemouth University, IEM meetings, the NOS review and more recently the Trailblazer Event Apprenticeship development (First), the Professionalisation Workshop at AEME2016 (Appendix D) and the BVEP Professionalisation Forum 28 October 2016 (Appendix E).

As with other industries, the reason for gaining professional status is not primarily about pay, or an increase in fees for clients, but about the legitimisation of what somebody accomplishes in their employment or the work that a business creates. It is about events being recognized as requiring specialist skills and knowledge and being acknowledged as complex and risky. Yes, there will still be people who 'fall into' events and those that organize events as part of their voluntary leisure time. The same is true of finance. We do not all have accountants or financial advisors to organise our family affairs. We are more likely, however, to pay for a professional to organize a birthday party or a wedding.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 Options
    5.1.1 **No action** – status quo is fine as it is
    5.1.2 **Traditional model** with one central organisation (e.g. Council, Institute)
        a.   Body of knowledge
        b.   Educational/accreditation structure and powers
        c.   Code of practice/conduct
    5.1.3 A more **socially constructed model** which requires existing bodies and organisation to work more collaboratively to develop an event professional framework within which existing provision can be included. Gaps can then be recognised as opportunities, economies of scale on working together etc.

The preferred model created and identified at the Professionalisation Forum on 28 October was similar to the third option above (5.1.3). In contrast, the result from analysing the interviews in the PiE study, was that a more traditional approach was desired (5.1.2 above). This could be because this is the overriding model that exists in other industries. However, the content of such a structure was what people spoke about in the wider discussions. It could be argued that we already have a body that was established to do this, the Institute of Event Management (IEM). The interviews asked participants about their knowledge of the IEM and their views on supporting this body to take things forward and how best this could be achieved with existing trade and professional bodies. It was considered that there had been little support for IEM and so it was not deemed the most appropriate body to take professionalisation forward. Those that knew nothing or very little about the IEM were unable to comment.

5.2 Actions
There are a number of actions that could be taken given the results of the analysis of the PiE project and outlined in the table in Appendix C. Until further work has been done, these cannot be confirmed nor a timescale or designation of responsibility identified. If option one is not the preferred option from this meeting, then these are proposed as the short-term actions:

5.2.1 Gather information into one place that maps out current qualifications and courses against the National Qualification Frameworks (http://ow.ly/rLAk30cHRig), including Event Apprenticeships (http://ow.ly/6nMX30cHR0H), the International Events Qualification Framework (http://www.otec.org/Files/pdf/IEQF-Poster-FINAL.aspx), Association courses (e.g. MPI's CMP http://www.eventscouncil.org/CMP.aspx; ILEA's CESP http://www.ileahub.com/CSEP) and supporting certificates (e.g. Event Safety Passport). The author has already started this but with everyone committed to providing information that would speed things along (a draft list of questions for Partners to answer is attached).

5.2.2 To identify from these the current body of knowledge, in addition to the existing QAA Subject Benchmark Statements (http://ow.ly/5irv30cHPlG), Event Body of Knowledge (http://www.embok.org/) and relevant content from the BVEP resource directory.

5.2.3 To bring together key members of industry to discuss these in detail. It is anticipated that the first stage may well be Level 6, degree level (BA, BSc). AEME is, in parallel, working on the application of the QAA SBS beyond being part of the general validation and revalidation process of degrees for Levels 6 and 7 to something that is slightly more prescriptive for AEME Recognition but also 'light touch' because there are limited resources to support this and in the first instance may exclude education providers from the process which is not helpful going forward. The details of this will be part of a workshop at AEME2017 at the Cardiff Metropolitan University 5-7 July 2017.

CONCLUSION

Overall there is substantial support for the traditional components of professionalisation within the ES. There is also a strong base of existing knowledge, qualifications, codes of practice and initiatives that can come together to bring the ES together. The BVEP was established to facilitate the connection of the different parts of the ES and professionalisation is an opportunity that will demonstrate its unity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A PiE research questions

Aim: what are people's views of professionalisation in the events sector in the UK?

- Is there an ES in the UK?
- Does its structure enhance or inhibit professionalisation?
- What is understood by professionalisation?
- What are the important characteristics of professionalisation?
- To what extent are these already in existence in the ES?
- Is professionalisation needed in the ES and why/why not?
- To what extent are existing trade and professional bodies and the IEM best placed to lead on professionalisation?
- What are the challenges to professionalisation in the ES?
- What needs to change/what action needs to take place to enable the professionalisation process to advance the ES?
- Who (people and organisations) need to be part of this process to give it credibility and ES traction?
- What commitment is there from the people interviewed for their support and engagement in professionalisation

Appendix B

List of PiE interview participants

Thank you to the participants for their time and views and to Bournemouth University for funding Georgia Robertson as a student research assistant.

Name	Organisation
Beverley Griffiths	Director of Resilience, Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College (IEM Board)
Dale Parmenter	CEO of DRP
Damian Hutt	Executive Director of the Association of Association Executives
David Preston	CEO Realise
Emma Abson	Senior Lecturer, Sheffield Hallam University
Fay Sharpe	VP BD&E and Zibrant
Heather Lishman	Director ABCO
Jason Megson	MD George P Johnson
Linda Agyemang	EM Student - University of West London
Lucy Laville	EM Course Director, Leeds Beckett University
Mark Riches	First (Trailblazer Event Apprenticeship Scheme)
Michael Hirst	BVEP Chair
Owen Grainger-Jones	EM Course Director, University of Surrey
Rachel Ley	RLC
Richard Parker	MPI (Past President)
Rick Stainton	MD Smyle
Sharon McElhinney	EM Course Leader, University of West London
Susan Spibey	Chair IEM and SJS International
Susan Tanner	CEO NOEA
Teresa Moore	Director Greener Festival

Appendix C
Professionalisation in Events (PiE) summary table

Core themes	Secondary themes	Challenges	Strengths/Opportunities	Proposed actions	Who?	When?
Events sector or industry? Scoping the terrain	Composition	• Fragmented – venues, technology, staffing; tourism, hospitality, creative. • Too operationally, not strategically, focused. • BVEP is a partnership of trade and professional bodies not individual companies or people. • SMEs dominance.	• There is a common core of event management, whatever the event, which can unite all of the separate parts, as it does in an event. • Not necessarily have to be an event organisation/company, just one that organises them, for whatever reason.	• We continue to build a common agenda from all BVEP partners but also others that work to create events. • The more activities we do jointly the more we will look and feel like an ES.		
	Perceptions	• Internal • External	• Award ceremonies etc. recognise. • Contracts and employment.	• Media coverage beyond ES.		
	Demand and desires	• Financial and time constraints to achieve what would like for ES. • Paying a membership fee so expecting a ROI when not just £ but sharing of ideas.	• Sharing of resources so that we are greater than the sum of our parts.	• Look for resources from within for project-specific activities.		
Trade & professional bodies (not many PSRBs	Current provision	• Limited power and influence because not PSRBs. • Too many; too niche; limited in size.	• Like-minded people have come together and developed strengths in their area. • Willingness to come together e.g. BVEP.	• Seek active engagement from all in bringing everything together.		
	IEM	• Little knowledge of what it is and how it works. • Those that did know were sceptical of its future given the lack of support it has garnered.	• IEM has legal status. • It has varied support from different places to build upon.	• Invite IEM representatives to be part of the discussions.		
Professionalism Profession Professional Professionalisation De-professionalisation Re-professionalisation	Standards and certification	• Difficult to set and measure competencies well. • Not everyone is aware or agrees with existing schemes e.g. EMBOK, EMICs	• There are some existing programmes that can be built upon e.g. QAA SBS, EA, NOS, CMP, CESP.	• Draw together in one place what there is and to get ES commentators to identify what works at different levels, what is missing etc.		
	Legitimacy	• Unskilled activity that anyone can do.	• Recognise that they can, only to a certain level.	• Publicise the risks of not having an experienced and qualified event company/person.		
	Comparison	• There are professional bodies who are trying to take on events as an opportunity because it is a	• Any developed/promoted certification could be co-promoted with those other	• Speak to these as the framework and content is developed to share good and poor lessons.		

		growth area e.g. IoH. This would potentially narrow the scope of events to that particular body.	bodies that have events in their portfolio (e.g. marketing; hospitality; tourism).	• Review the potential options of joining force with others, including the EIC.	
	Future	• Membership associations are struggling for numbers.	• We seek out like-minded/practiced people. What is changing is where and how we do this.	• Establish a set of principles that will guide future developments.	
Employment/ workforce	Human capital	• Need for better understanding and reward of different levels of people working in the ES. • All are expected to be professional in whatever their part is to play in providing an event, from the MD to the sub-contracted volunteer workforce. • The 'professional' however is assumed to be of a certain managerial level.	• There is an interest and a passion to work in the ES. • The work is interesting and variable, even in lesser-known areas of exhibitions.	• Work with initiatives such as Events are Great Britain to showcase the breadth and depth of the ES, beyond the business visitor perspective currently given. • Highlight the complexity and risky nature of events, not just the exciting content and experiences on offer.	
	Education (incl. CPD	• There has been a growth in the number of event related qualifications, especially at degree level (4-6). There have been some criticisms of courses and/or graduates but with limited evidence beyond the individual anecdote to substantiate this. • Having a certificate does not ensure the work of a person in any given job.	• Current courses do include a similar content re: event planning, production, H&S&S, creativity, design, technology, policy and practice and management (e.g. HR, finance, marketing, strategy). • There is a strong element of experience and practice – this could be further specified?	• As above for standards and certification – build benchmark subjects and content for different levels. • Get into the detail but without undermining the future-proofing that has been inherent in the process.	

Appendix D
AEME2016 Professionalisation Workshop facilitated by Rachel Ley (RLC) and including Susan Spibey (IEM), Gerard Ryan (University of Salford, AEME Exec) and Caroline Jackson (Bournemouth University and AEME Chair).

Delegate	Institution
Alan Marvell	University of Gloucestershire
Albert Postma	Stenden University
Allan Jepson	University of Hertfordshire
Caroline Jackson	Bournemouth University
Carolyn Sarah Branston	Manchester Metropolitan University
Catherine Parker	University College Birmingham
Cathryn Peach	Wild Rumpus Events
Chantal Laws	University of Westminster
Clair Greenaway	University of Gloucestershire
Claire Leer	University of Northampton
Colin Beard	Sheffield Hallam University
Daniel Turner	UWS
Daryl May	Sheffield Hallam University
David Lamb	Edith Cowan University, Western Australia
Eddy Grant	University of Derby
Emma Martin	Sheffield Hallam University
Emma Nolan	University of Winchester
Emma Parkinson	Buckingham New University
Erin McDermott	Bournemouth University
Fotios Vasileiou	GSM London
Gemma Gelder	Coventry University
Graham Berridge	University of Surrey
Hildegard Wieshofer	University of Derby
Iride Azara	University of Derby
Ivana Rihova	Edinburgh Napier University
Jackie Mulligan	Leeds Beckett University
Jamie Greatorex	University of Derby
Jane Ali-Knight	Edinburgh Napier University
Jenny Flinn	Glasgow Caladonian University
Julie Whitfield	Bournemouth University
Karen Davies	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Leila Edwards	University College Birmingham
Liam Higgins	Southampton Solent University
Liz Quick	UWL
Lynsey Melhuish	Southampton Solent University
Mary Beth Guthro	Bournemouth University
Matt Bunday	University of Winchester
Michael Duignan	Anglia Ruskin University
Olivia Ramsbottom	University of Derby
Peter Vlachos	
Peter Wilshier	University of Derby

Purimprach Sangkaew	University of Surrey
Rachel Ley	RLC
Richard Voase	Lincoln University
Rosemary Cooil	University College Isle of Man
Sarah Rawlinson	University of Derby
Sheridan Easton	Southampton Solent University
Simon Glinn	Buxton Opera House
Stephen Edenborough	University of West Scotland
Suzanne Dowse	Canterbury University
Tom Garrett	University of West Scotland
Valentina Gorchakova	Auckland University of Technology
Vladimir Antchak	University of Derby
W. Gerard Ryan	Salford University

Appendix E
BVEP Professionalisation Forum delegates list 28 October 2016
Facilitated by Chris Elmitt, Crystal Interactive; scribed by Sarah Webster, organised by Rachel Ley (RLC) and Caroline Jackson. Hosted by the University of Westminster.

LAST NAME	FIRST	ORGANISATION
Agyemang	Linda	Student - University of West London
Bullen	Harriet	First Agency
Bunday	Matt	Matt Bunday Events, Winchester & Surrey Universities
Chunzhang	Liu Dr	Donghua University, Shanghai
Clowes	Elena	International Live Events Association
Cook	Paul	Planetplanit
Davis	Kathryn	Destination Bristol
Dennis	Carmel	BVEP
Elmitt	Chris	Crystal Interactive
England	Gaynor	Experience Nottinghamshire
Ferneyhough	Bob	HR Consultant
Girvan	Martin	Sports Grounds Safety Authority
Goalen	Louise	Ashfield Meetings & Events
Handforth	Mark	Compliant Venues
Harrison	Andrew	Event Supplier & Services Association
Hawthorne	Ollie	Student - Bournemouth University
Hirst OBE	Michael	BVEP Chairman
Hughes	Simon	MCH Associates
Hutt	Damian	Association of Association Executives
Hyde CBE	John	HIT Training
Jackson	Caroline	BVEP Vice Chair, Bournemouth University
Kelly	Deborah	London & Partners
Lancaster-Smith	Amy	NSPCC
Ley	Rachel	RLC
Lishman	Heather	Lishman Associates
Miralem	Mihri	Visit Scotland
Morgan	James	University of Westminster, Event Tech Lab
Papis	Jeff	Regents University London
Petrova	Christina	Events Marketing Association
Preston	David	DPC Ltd
Price	Juliet	HBAA
Riches	Mark	First (Trailblazer apprenticeships)
Ryan	Gerard Dr	University of Salford
Skeith	Chris	Association of Event Organisers
Small	Karen	BDRC Continental
Spibey	Susan	Institute of Events Management
Tupper	Angela	Business Development & Marketing Advisory Business
Turner	Alistair	EIGHT PR & Marketing
Webster	Sarah	Webster Wright Marketing Communications
Wood	Abigail	Barclays Events