

The Rt. Hon Grant Shapps MP

Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
E: shappsq@parliament.uk

4th November 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

I write on behalf of UKEVENTS, representing the collective voice of the UK's world-leading Events Industry, to warmly congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Following the pandemic, your Department has recognised the critical importance of the Sector in supporting the delivery of the government's growth agenda and providing a highly competitive and productive platform for UK businesses to do business. Apart from attracting international business visitors to the UK to attend conferences, exhibitions and trade fairs, there are wider economic benefits to be recognised.

Business events generate trade, exports, inward investment, regeneration, knowledge exchange and scientific and technological innovation, as well as providing a showcase for Britain on the global stage. This is the result of the UK having resilient, highly innovative, world-class conference, exhibition and trade fair sectors that are estimated to generate more than £165 billion of trade transactions annually from both UK and international businesses. Business events offer small businesses an affordable and convenient opportunity to market their products and services to a global audience.

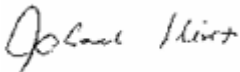
Through the Tourism Recovery Plan, the Government has already recognised that business events are key to driving the recovery of the tourism economy, in which attendance at events in the UK accounts for over half of all visitor spend. This is currently estimated to be worth around £50 billion. However the Industry is targeting to build back to pre-pandemic levels in excess of £70 billion within the next eighteen months. The Recovery Plan sets out new initiatives that will improve the already strong offer of the UK as a world destination of choice for meetings, conferences and exhibitions, so that it can retain its unrivalled position as the world's meeting place. Current initiatives include measures that will enhance Ministerial advocacy and support and prioritise events in the Government's target economic and business sectors.

The Industry strongly believes there is considerable merit in viewing the business events sector as part of the UK's business services sector and fully embracing these opportunities within your Department's remit. There are significant untapped opportunities which would support the Government's objectives for the growth of the economy, if the Events sector was given a more strategic role in the delivering and implementing of government policies. This does require more collaboration of resource across Government Departments, as several including, BEIS, DIT, DCMS and the Cabinet Office, together with agencies such as the Arts Council, UK Sport and VisitBritain are key stakeholders in this process too. Such a review may well help the current process of securing further government efficiencies.

Representatives of UKEVENTS hope you would agree to discuss further how the opportunities from business events can be even more greatly leveraged to support the Government's agenda and meet your Department's policy objectives.

In the meantime, I wish you every success in your new role.

With kindest regards,



Michael Hirst OBE

Lead – Advocacy & Government Relations

UKEVENTS

About UKEVENTS

Brand position

UKEVENTS is the recognised and collective voice of our world leading events industry, which represents every part of a diverse, creative and dynamic sector across the whole of the UK and champions the economic, societal and transformational value of events.

Role and Mission

[UKEVENTS](https://ukevents.org.uk/), formerly the Business Visits and Events Partnership's (BVEP), role is to support the work of our partners to help create a strong and growing events industry. This industry comprises many diverse and individual sectors, covering meetings, conferences, exhibitions, trade shows, incentive travel, event hospitality, ceremonies, sporting, cultural, outdoor and festivals as well as other services provided by the wider supply chain. We achieve this by:

- Providing an inclusive and open forum for events industry leaders to share thoughts, experiences and insights that enable us to communicate with one clear and collective voice
 - Establishing a series of sector specific working groups which meet regularly to discuss mutual areas of interest and advance those areas
-

- Engaging with Government and policymakers to raise awareness of events to the UK economy and society and their ability to progress policy objectives
- Continuing to advance the message of business events being a driver for international trade and exports and inward investment
- Amplifying the work of its partner organisations and sharing best practice, research and other areas of activity
- Undertaking regular research, trends analysis and insights to help the industry make informed decisions and shape the future of the UK events sector
- Working with DCMS and other Government departments and agencies to provide regular market insights and intelligence and identify areas where business events can support their objectives and agendas
- Contributing to and supporting the work of all associated organisations, including the Tourism Industry Council, All Party Parliamentary Group for Events, VisitBritain and the devolved Nations and key UK Cities.

Partners

UKEVENTS exists to represent the interests of its partners, their members and the wider UK events industry. We are proud to represent the following organisations:

- ABPCO - Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
- AEME - Association for Events Management Education
- beam
- BTA - Business Travel Association
- Core Cities
- EIA - Events Industry Alliance (AEO, AEV, ESSA)
- EIF - Events Industry Forum
- EMA - Event Marketing Association
- EVCOM - Event & Visual Communications Association
- ICCA - International Congress & Convention Association
- London & Partners
- MIA - Meetings Industry Association
- Meet in Ireland ((including Tourism Ireland, Failte Ireland, and Northern Ireland Tourist Board)
- MPI
- NOEA - National Outdoor Events Association
- PCMA - Professional Convention Management Association
- PLASA - Professional Lighting and Sound Association
- PSA - Production Services Association
- TNI - Tourism Northern Ireland
- UVL - Unique Venues of London
- VisitBritain
- VisitScotland Business Events
- Visit Wales.