



#WeMakeEvents briefings:

Consequences of the roadmap delay for the live event supply chain

The Live Events Supply Chain has endured a great deal of hardship as part of the first industry to close. It has also been the last at the table for government support throughout the pandemic.

Stage four of the roadmap was never going to be the magic wand that saved the industry, but it could have been the key to unlocking the planning process that would eventually lead us back to full productivity.

As the nation returns to normal, we need Government to recognise that 'normal' is still a long way off for live events. We need the government to underwrite events, through insurance, allowing the Live Events sector to create its own road map to full productivity. We also need clear guidance from government to help us create that road map.

#WeMakeEvents urgent asks of Government

The live event supply chain needs urgent support, without further delay and without the exclusions, oversights, and red tape we have experienced so far.

- o **Immediately release the c£300 million remaining CRF funds through a rapid distribution system that automatically includes the live events supply chain**
Create a live event supply chain support fund to enable the sector to access a fair share of remaining CRF funds. Furthermore, dramatically simplify the complex and time-consuming application process – in particular, removing the arbitrary cultural significance test, which has caused so many live event supply chain businesses to be unable to access the scheme.
- o **Extend the 100% business rates relief scheme and specifically, include the live event supply chain in the scheme**
Currently, most live event supply chain businesses are excluded from the Government's 100% business rates relief scheme because they are not venues – this scheme should be urgently extended to include live event supply chain businesses so that they are not liable for business rates while they are barred from making an income. Furthermore, Government should urgently direct local authorities to use their remaining discretionary funding to support live event businesses while they are unable to operate.
- o **Government-backed Covid-19 cancellation insurance**
Provide Government-backed Covid-19 cancellation insurance to allow promoters, venues, and organisers to plan ahead with confidence, leading to confirmation of contracts with suppliers and freelancers. This measure can restrict the scope of the damage, restore confidence, and allow future events to happen.
- o **Financial support for businesses through amended CBILS terms**
Convert CBILS to grants or loans on similar repayment schedules as student loans, or at a minimum extend repayment terms and payment-free periods. Businesses that are effectively prevented from trading cannot generate the income to repay the loans they have been forced to take out in order to survive.
- o **Extend furlough until we are fully open to reflect the delay to the roadmap**
Allow staff newly recruited in anticipation of re-opening to be included in CJRS and extend CJRS for the live event sector until at least four months after restrictions are finally fully lifted.
- o **Adjust support for the self-employed, including 'single director limited companies', to give parity to CJRS and extend schemes until we are fully open**
SEISS has supported many, but there are inexplicable exclusions and gaps in the terms of the scheme. We urgently need funds to be on parity with CJRS and for those who have fallen through the gaps to be included in the scheme. Furthermore, SEISS for the live event supply chain remain in place at the full 80% rate until the barriers to fully reopening are removed.
- o **Engagement with the sector to take the learnings of the ERP and create a blueprint for events beyond "freedom day"**



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This is required as it is clear that stadia, arenas and any large-scale gathering will need the involvement and sign-off of local authority and PHE officials before event licenses will be issued. However, the knowledge is currently restricted to those cities and authorities that have held pilot events. The risk and concern is that broad Government or PHE guidelines will be distributed to local authority officials who are unfamiliar with detailed event planning, and therefore, will be risk averse – and consequently say no, potentially at the 11th hour (as witnessed at the Southampton Boat Show 2020).

WHY DO WE NEED ALL THIS NOW?

The story so far:

- We have flagged our concern about the Live Events Supply Chain many times and as the nation returns to normal it is essential to flag that 'normal' for events is still a long way off
- The nature of live events requires extensive pre-planning, and up-front financial commitment as event organisers book venues, expert services and crew.
- This gives rise to a 'lead-time' that means we cannot open on "Freedom Day", whatever the date without an events sector road map and blueprint.
- "Freedom Day" to us only means the 'Freedom to plan' events.
- The Government recognised that it would take time to recover and re-open hence the support schemes were mapped out until September, but the taper system that's seen support reduce over August and September will impact the sector at the worst moment.
- The Government have never recognised that large scale events would still require guidance, planning and co-ordination well beyond Freedom Day.
- Any events that are in planning phase right now, including those that have sold tickets, are 'unconfirmed'. Purchase orders are not being issued to supply chain companies or personnel. Quotes are being requested but none are turning into confirmed work.
- The absence of Covid-19 cancellation insurance makes it impossible to plan ahead.
- With delay to July 19th, more and more events will be compressed into late August and September to try and salvage some sort of the summer.
- This will give rise to a critical shortage of personnel. So many freelancers have been forced to seek work in other sectors and can only make the leap back to events when sufficient work volume of confirmed events exist to give them security to leave their temporary jobs.
- In addition to this, there will be a skills shortage as some of those who have been forced out will not return. Once forced to work in other sectors, the added impact of the lack of provision in the Brexit deal for our sector further undermines their security and ability to return to work in this sector.
- Business owners are facing tough decisions about bringing staff back from furlough, when there is still no certainty of what events can and will go ahead at full capacity without restrictions.
- Businesses are facing the issue of having to start to repay CBILS and other loans, before their revenues have a chance to recover.
- Businesses are still waiting for CRF2 (and in some cases final stages of CRF1) cash to reach their banks.
- Equipment inventories are depleted due to businesses having to sell off assets to survive the pandemic this far.
- Businesses are struggling to get credit against a back-drop of poor accounts results due the pandemic, leading to lack of finance appetite or increased rates from banks/lenders.
- The LRG and ARG grant schemes have been wholly inadequate and have left the Live Events Supply Chain eligible for approximately one ninth of the support that businesses who are legally forced to close have received.
- Freelancers are already disadvantaged either by being excluded from support or by the short-comings of the SEISS scheme.
- The issues are compounded by the different approaches applied in the devolved nations which have been equally problematic.

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