

## Theatre APPG

**Subject:** COVID-19 and the UK theatre sector – the impact and solutions to recovery



**Date, time and location:** Tuesday 26 January 2021, 13.30-15.00 hrs, Zoom

### Contents

- [Joining instructions](#)
- [Format](#)
- [Background to this session](#)
- [Speaker Brief](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Attendees](#)
- [Theatre APPG's Statement of Purpose](#)

### Background to this session

This meeting follows a [letter](#) sent in December to the Secretary of State for DCMS and those that represent theatre in the devolved administrations. The Theatre APPG wrote this letter because the theatre sector needs help to introduce some consistency for the industry across the UK, not least to help tours that move between Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland.

We do appreciate that health and arts powers are devolved, but the inconsistencies between the devolved nations are causing additional difficulties for the industry, especially when moving between different jurisdictions.

The APPG is working with theatre bodies from across the UK and this issue has been raised with us regularly. We know that some universality between devolved administrations, even if it is on a temporary basis, would be warmly received.

This meeting is a good way for parliamentarians and Civil Servants from across the UK to hear, in one go, from theatre professionals in all four countries and their representative bodies: UK Theatre / SOLT; Creu Cymru; Community Leisure UK; Theatre and Dance Northern Ireland; Federation of Scottish Theatres.

The APPG has had a number of evidence sessions in 2020, with one already covering the impact of COVID-19. You can see contributions from the speakers here:

<a href="#">Freelancers and early career</a>	Mumba Dodwell, Freelance theatre director, actor and founder of The Diversity School Initiative
<a href="#">Organisation view</a>	Julia Potts, Business Director (UK Venues), Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG)
<a href="#">Disability / We Shall Not Be Removed campaign</a>	Robert Softley-Gale, Artistic Director, Birds of Paradise Theatre company
<a href="#">Embedding anti-racism action within the industry</a>	Amanda Huxtable, Artistic Director & CEO, Eclipse

### Speaker brief

- Each of the speakers will talk for up to seven minutes.
- They will briefly cover the impact of COVID-19 on their business / profession (with the exception of Rupert Gavin who is talking on insurance and Theatre Tax Relief as part of the COVID-19 recovery).

- Speakers will then suggest what needs to be done to help their part of the sector / or theatre in their country and across the UK.
- Following the speakers, we have set aside time to discuss possible policy changes that the APPG could pursue to secure the necessary changes identified during the session. This will then be followed by questions.

## Agenda

Time	Subject	Speaker	Twitter handle
13.30	House Keeping	Hannah Gagen, UK Theatre / SOLT	
13.32	Introduction to the session	Chair - Giles Watling, MP for Clacton	@GilesWatling
13.35	COVID-19 & theatre update	Julian Bird, Chief Executive UK Theatre and SOLT	@UK_Theatre @SOLTnews
13.40	Economic stimulus: Insurance and Theatre Tax Relief	Rupert Gavin, Independent Producer & SOLT Board Member	
13.50	The ongoing impact of COVID-19 on freelancers / self-employed	Emma Jayne Park, Independent dance artist, theatre-maker and arts advocate	@culturedmongrel
13.57	Welsh theatre industry & COVID-19	Hannah Kester, Head of Cultural Development - Awen Cultural Trust	@awen_wales
14.05	Scottish theatre industry & COVID-19	Liam Sinclair, Executive Director & Joint CEO - Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre Kris Bryce, Executive Director – Pitlochry Festival Theatre	@DundeeRep @PITLOCHRYft
14.12	Northern Irish theatre industry & COVID-19	Claire Murray, Head of Development & Marketing, Jimmy Fay, Executive producer, Micheál Meegan, Head of Finance & HR - Lyric Theatre	@LyricBelfast
14.30	Policy Options Discussion	APPG Officers / Parliamentarians	
14.50	Questions	APPG Officers / Parliamentarians	
14.55	Summary / actions	APPG Chair	
15.00	Close	APPG Chair	

## Parliamentary Attendees

- Steffan Roberts - Deputy Director Culture and Sport, Welsh Government
- Gary Williams - Office of the Deputy Director for Culture and Sport, Welsh Government
- Maeve Walls – Director, Culture, Department For Communities, Northern Ireland
- John Ball - Head of Arts Branch, Department for Communities, Northern Ireland
- James McNulty – Head of Culture Strategy and Engagement, Scottish Government
- Hannah Duffy – Head of Economic Policy Development - COVID 19 Response, at DCMS
- Mark Hicks - DCMS
- Plus, a selection of Officers from the APPG:

Constituency	Name	Party	Twitter
Clacton	Giles Watling MP	Conservative	@GilesWatling
Glasgow Central	Alison Thewliss MP	Scottish National Party	@alisonthewliss

Cardiff West	Kevin Brennan MP	Labour	@KevinBrennanMP
N/A	Baroness Hamwee	Liberal democrat	
Stafford	Theo Clarke MP	Conservative	@theodoraclarke
South Basildon & East Thurrock	Stephen Metcalfe MP	Conservative	@Metcalfe_SBET
N/A	Lord Kerslake	Crossbench	@SirBobKerslake
Northampton South	Andrew Lewer MP	Conservative	@ALewerMBE
Clwyd South	Simon Baynes MP	Conservative	@baynes_simon
N/A	Baroness Whitaker	Labour	
Batley and Spen	Tracy Brabin MP	Labour (Co-op)	@TracyBrabin
Cities of London and Westminster	Nickie Aiken MP	Conservative	@twocitiesnickie
Bristol East	Kerry McCarthy MP	Labour	@KerryMP

**Theatre APPG's Statement of purpose is:**

- Support the resilience and relevance of theatre in the UK for audiences, society and the industry
- Identify and debate potential opportunities and issues for theatre in the UK
- Support parliamentarians' understanding of theatre and the performing arts industry at a national and local level.