



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture
4th Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

E: enquiries@culture.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dcms

Giles Watling MP
Chair of APPG for Theatre
giles.watling.mp@parliament.uk

15 July 2020

Our Ref:
MC2020/09338/JD

Dear Giles,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 May to the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, with a joint letter from the officers of the All-Party Parliamentary Groups representing the performing arts, with information as to the support needed for the survival and recovery of the theatre and the performing arts sector. Your correspondence has been passed to DCMS as your concerns fall within our remit and I am responding as the minister for this policy area.

As you are aware, the government recognises the huge contribution the theatre sector makes, not only to the economy and international reputation of the United Kingdom, but also to the wellbeing and enrichment of its people.

It is of utmost importance to me and the work of the department that we are able to continue to support and celebrate the work of theatres and all arts institutions and businesses, which are so vital to the cultural life of the nation. This is why, on 5 July, alongside other government support, we announced a major £1.57 billion package for arts organisations across the publicly-funded and non-publicly funded sectors.

Culture and Heritage are at the heart of communities across the country, enriching the lives of millions, and this financial investment is testament to the role this sector plays in our lives. The fund will protect cultural assets of international, national and regional importance, including supporting the levelling up agenda by preventing the loss of valuable cultural fabric from our towns and regions. This fund will support organisations through to the Spring of 2021.

Key organisations in England will be able to apply for grants or loans, with loans being offered on generous terms, with low rates, an up-front repayment holiday, and long payback period. In order to receive support, organisations will need to demonstrate that they are at risk in this financial year and have done all they can to exhaust other options. We will be prioritising institutions of national and international significance and those that are crucial to levelling up places, communities, and economic growth across the country.

Grant funding will be delivered through Arts Council England, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the British Film Institute, to support cultural organisations at risk, including arts organisations across the publicly-funded and non-publicly funded sectors, museums and heritage organisations, music venues and independent cinemas. We are currently working alongside Arts Council England on the criteria for eligibility and will make a further announcement on this funding shortly. Further information can be found here:



www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions.

Prior to this announcement in March, the government also implemented an unprecedented package to support businesses, charitable organisations, workers and the self-employed through the Coronavirus crisis. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and business rates relief in particular are providing support to organisations across the arts sector. CBILS for example, will make it easier for SMEs with a turnover of up to £45 million to access vital financial support during these difficult times.

The extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was announced in May, which has been extended to the end of July, with more flexibility being introduced from August to October. The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme has also been extended with applications opening in August for a second and final grant. The grant will operate in the same way as the existing scheme with self-employed workers eligible for a single payment covering three months, at a level of 70% of average monthly earnings up to a maximum of £6,570 (i.e. down from 80% and a maximum of £7,500).

DCMS continues to work closely with Arts Council England to monitor and respond to the challenges being faced by the arts and cultural sectors. Arts Council England has delivered a £160 million emergency response package in response to the current crisis, made possible by Government funding, to ensure the immediate resilience of this vital sector, and to ensure that, where possible, it can respond creatively to the needs of communities at this extremely challenging time. So far, over 9000 individuals and organisations have been successful in applying to the Emergency Response Fund. More information on this package, and where the fund is going can be found here: www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19/data.

A further priority of my department is to work with the arts and cultural sectors to address the challenges of reopening, as and when it will be possible to do so. From the information we have been receiving from various organisations and professionals, we know that the picture is nuanced across the country.

The Secretary of State recently revealed a five stage roadmap that the government will work through to get the performing arts sectors back up and running. The roadmap outlines the five stages that will open up performing arts venues as soon as possible. The guidance can be found here: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts. It provides advice on all aspects of performance, from casting, sound and lighting, costume and fitting, to cloakrooms, orchestra pits, hair and make-up.

You will most likely be aware that the first two stages of the plan, rehearsals and training adhering to social distancing and performances for broadcast only, are already underway in some places. Further, from 11 July, audiences can all enjoy performances outdoors with social distancing and we are working hard to get indoor audiences back as soon as we safely can, following pilots. Further decisions will be made in line with expert medical advice and the latest public health guidance.

On 9 July we published guidance for people who work in performing arts, including arts organisations, venue operators and participants which will help people understand how they can work and take part in the performing arts safely, and keep their audiences safe: www.gov.uk/government/news/performing-arts-given-green-light-to-resume-outdoors-on-july-11.



You may also be aware that representatives from the arts, cultural and sporting worlds have joined a taskforce aimed at supporting the country's recreation and leisure sector up as it gets up and running again. The Entertainment and Events working group, which is one of the eight working groups that is supporting the government's Cultural Renewal Taskforce includes Arts Council England and UK Theatre amongst other organisations from the arts and culture sector. The full membership of the Entertainment and Events Working Group is available online here: www.gov.uk/government/groups/cultural-renewal-taskforce-and-supporting-working-groups

I hope your colleagues and yourself find this information useful.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Dinenage". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture