

UK Theatre Business Plan 2021-2022

Interim strategy to cover the remainder of the Covid-19 pandemic period.



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Introduction

UK Theatre's Business Plan 2021-22 reflects a changed landscape post-Covid 19. Our organisation's aims - to support the sector in being **relevant, resilient, proactive** and **innovative** - are as important now as ever. We are dedicated to helping the industry rebuild, and this commitment underpins all our work over the next 12 months.

Our core objectives reflect those from our Business Plan 2017-21:

- Focus on the future of the theatre and performing arts workforce
- Improve representation and the diversity of theatre and the performing arts
- Support funding and income generation
- Support digital developments and changes to working practices
- Support the health of touring and the regional producing and presenting model
- Be a trusted and knowledgeable voice in advocating for the sector on key issues
- Devise, deliver and support research and analysis to drive the resilience of the sector, build audiences and support advocacy
- Provide a training, events and conference programme for the sector
- Modernise the sector's approach to employment relations
- Support members with in-house legal, safety and technical advice
- Celebrate excellence through the UK Theatre Awards

We have prioritised our immediate work within these areas according to the new post-pandemic recovery environment our sector exists in. Our focus has been on making this plan concise and agile, which has resulted in some proposed projects already having been completed during the development of this document. Pandemic recovery and diversity and inclusion both have their own sections within the Business Plan, but they are also embedded throughout.

Pandemic Recovery

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize and explain re-opening laws and guidance for the industry, including ongoing repository of information on own websites. • Continue delivery of 'Managing COVID-19 Safely' training courses while demand exists. • Advocate for quarantine exemption for performing arts to be re-introduced. • Advocate for a COVID insurance deal (cancellation, business interruption, overseas travel coverage, etc) for the sector. • Advocate for changes to Theatre Tax Relief (either or both of rate increases and technical changes to qualifying expenditure). • Advocate for Local Authorities' review of rent for venues. • Advocate for how theatre can help the UK recover from COVID: economically, socially, through health and wellbeing. • Advocate for extension of VAT reduction for ticket sales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what other forms of financial support might be needed as pandemic outcomes change. • Take appropriate advice on issues regarding COVID certification as situation develops. • Promote See it Safely campaign to rebuild audience confidence. • Promote #BackOnStage reopening campaign where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on lessons learned and formulate a business continuity plan for future pandemics and similar world events.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to act as the main liaison for sector with UK government. • Play active role in government committees and working groups as established, and seek to ensure representation of different interests from across UK Theatre membership. • Update members with twice-weekly newsletters, and regular webinars, on changes. These services to also be available to the sector where possible. • Support the sector's reopening around Steps 3 & 4 of the government roadmap through appropriate training, toolkits (including "See It Safely") and clear guidance. 		

Advocacy

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support members in Scotland and Wales on May 2021 elections. • Prepare for next Comprehensive Spending Review, expected to be announced Nov 2021. • Consider appropriate responses around devolution. • Formulate a local lobbying plan, encompassing Local Enterprise Partnerships, Business Improvement Districts, Local Authorities and Metro Mayors especially in relation to local government direct spending on arts in local areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following this phase of pandemic, review relationships with different national government departments and contacts. • Prepare for a possible change in government. • Following local election results, build new relationships with elected representatives.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat to the APPG for Theatre. • Spearhead and coordinate joint lobbying across the four UK countries, bringing together the theatre bodies. • Support and enable members to lobby directly. • Opposition party engagement. • Lobbying alongside sector bodies. • Provide written briefs for 1-2-1 meetings with parliamentarians to use in debates and Parliamentary Questions. • Provide shadow governments with Parliamentary Questions. • Regular submissions to Parliamentary inquiries and calls for evidence. • Political monitoring. • Support for Culture Counts. • Continue to convene the Cultural Campaigning Group. 		

Data, research and analysis

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and evaluate SOLT and UK Theatre’s members’ needs in relation to data for business and lobbying needs (including sales and audience data, sector income and expenditure, workforce, and the economic and social impact of theatre). • Lobby government to collect sector-focused data and provide better analysis. • Review research into the link between theatre attendance or participation and wellbeing. • Monitor members’ needs relating to collating or gathering data on consumer confidence and collaborate with relevant partners as required. • Disseminate existing consumer and market research key themes and trends to members to assist in planning for reopening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit an in-house Data Analyst to assist SOLT and UK Theatre with the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, to assist members with business planning and sector lobbying. • Investigate a streamlined, modernised system for collecting UK Theatre sales and audience data. • Support publication of British Repertoire Report. • Discussions with Visit Britain and DCMS about joint research to collect data on the link between tourism and theatres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with cultural sector organisations and government bodies to standardise metrics to enable more effective benchmarking of key business, economic and workforce data.

Diversity and inclusion

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the Speak Listen Reset Heal anti-racism conference, support the publication of Inc Arts' conference evaluation report. Revisit unconscious bias training outcomes from both SOLT/UK Theatre Board and staff sessions and create an internal anti-racism action plan for SOLT and UK Theatre. Undertake audits to monitor demographics and skills of the UK Theatre Board, UK Theatre membership, and Inclusion & Anti-Racism Working Group and Workforce Consortium participants. Complete work on revision to UK Theatre Articles of Association to improve diverse representation of the UK Theatre Board before the Autumn 2021 elections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with members on the Equality Act 2010 to improve best practice. Gather example policies, procedures and initiatives from our membership relating to inclusion and anti-racism to create a resource library. Update the 10 Principles in the Safer and More Supportive Working Practices Handbook to be inclusive of all protected characteristics. Create a communications plan for UK Theatre Board elections to improve transparency of processes, raise visibility and improve understanding, and diversify membership. Create a Working Group to identify and recruit new Board members, using Board member skills and demographic data to identify gaps. Consult with our membership on future developments of the Touring Rider and accompanying checklist as a practical anti-racist resource for venues, touring companies and producers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the development of a pilot mentoring programme, focussing on under-represented groups. Undertake annual demographic and skills audits of UK Theatre Board (following elections), UK Theatre membership and UK Theatre staff. Establish KPIs for measuring, monitoring and reporting on changes in behaviour in the sector, and the frequency and timetable for this reporting. Review the existing Dignity At Work training courses and assess them against members' needs in relation to updating their knowledge on employers' legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings of the Inclusion and Anti-Racism Working Group to review, discuss and plan for the future of the sector. Promote and maintain our Inclusive Recruitment Guide to assist members in embedding inclusivity in recruitment. Promote and maintain the Theatre Casting Toolkit to help make stages and rehearsal rooms more reflective of UK society. Promote UK Theatre's webinar recordings on removing barriers for d/Deaf and disabled people in theatre. Support and promote the Seven Inclusive Principles for Disabled People in Arts and Culture. Continue to monitor, update and promote UK Theatre's online resource to improve representation. Maintain a publicly available ongoing record of all SOLT and UK Theatre's work to improve diverse representation in the sector. 		

EU and International touring/activity

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the sector in understanding how to tour within and through EU post-Brexit. Collect case studies for government on the impact of Brexit on our industry. Play an active role in new DCMS-led committee on EU touring. Work with government on potential new cultural export office. Through CEO membership of Advisory Group on Trade for cultural industries, seek to input to trade deals with non-EU countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a dedicated webpage on the UK Theatre website to provide one place for guidance for the sector. Support the membership in understanding the new arrangements on visas and work permits needed in EU states, movement of goods, etc. 	
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise and host webinars updating members on Brexit-related issues as required. Brexit briefings for Parliamentarians and media 		

Funding, income generation and audience development

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist members in signing up to Theatre Tokens. Investigate a programme of webinars themed around income generation and innovative business practices for Theatre Means Business. 	
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote initiatives which enable members to engage with audiences and encourage ticket sales, e.g. See It Safely, #BackOnStage Promote free marketing opportunities for members through listings and offers on TheatreTokens.com, mailings to Theatre Tokens subscribers and guest blogs. UK Theatre Marketing Communications Working Group meeting regularly, alongside SOLT Marketing Communications Working Group. Continue to encourage use of SOLT and UK Theatre's Ticketing Principles to increase and promote audience confidence. Continue to support the Family Arts Campaign. Promotion for theatres through Visit Britain. 		

Legal, Employment Relations and Risk Management Services

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek clarification from PRS on the licensing of music in streamed productions. • Consult with the unions on changes to the Covid-19 variation agreements. • Amend the contract templates to incorporate the terms agreed in the Covid-19 variation agreements. • Meet with members to discuss the future application of the UK Theatre/BECTU Agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-draft the UK Theatre/Equity Commercial and Subsidised collective agreements. • Review the structure and operation of UK Theatre Employee Relations committees. • Ongoing monitoring and management of the operation of the variation agreements. • Support the membership in understanding the new immigration system. • Promote 'See It Safely' training and toolkit to members. • Policy work around sustainability. • Revision of the Code of Conduct – Get-ins, Fit-ups, and Get-outs to include modifications for Covid-19. • Support publication of sector sustainability guide The Green Book. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue delivery of IOSH Managing Safely training courses. • Engage with the unions regarding the post-Covid winding down of the variation agreements, and seeking further flexibility and modernisation of the operation and application of the collective agreements. • Review viability and format of 'Off Stage' conference.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor legal developments, anticipating issues that may impact the theatre and performing arts sector, and respond to external consultations. • Provide legal input to the projects and other work proposed in this business plan. • Provide 1-2-1 legal advice to organisation members, covering a wide range of areas of law. • Produce guidance notes for the membership on topical legal issues from time to time. • Produce a bi-monthly newsletter on relevant legal issues once “normal business” resumes post-pandemic. • Respond to queries from UK Theatre members regarding the collective agreements. • Provide risk management advice and consultancy services to members, including venue safety audits. • Management of the SOLT and UK Theatre Technical Committee and facilitation of industry forums such as the TOSCA security group and the Theatre Safety Committee (TSC). • Membership of the Association of British Theatre Technicians' Technical Standards Committee. • Support for the Theatres Trust's Making Theatre Sustainable campaign. 		

Membership and Member Communications

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of member benefits, particularly for partner members and professional members. • Monitor user experience and review user journeys on www.uktheatre.org. • Investigate refreshed website format/structure to improve member navigation and user experience. • Establish KPIs for membership recruitment and retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a communications plan to highlight to our members all the many initiatives and activities that are ongoing and relevant as well as those of other companies in the sector. • Review CRM functionality and user experience. • Review of membership categories.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to send regular newsletters to members and the wider sector with updates on government lobbying, industry support and recovery-related information. • Continue to provide webinars to members and the wider sector focussed on government lobbying, sector support and recovery planning information. • Verbal briefings to members and their representatives prior to press interviews. • Statements on key government announcements impacting the industry. 		

Theatrical content: touring, the regional producing and presenting model, and digital distribution

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the sector in continuing to expand in emerging markets. • Provide support to the Theatres Trust in their development of a database of touring venues. • Support the gathering of research and data on recent innovations in digital production and streaming (live and recorded) to share best practice. • Engage with the unions to provide more clarity on rates and terms for digital work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile or support the development of a database for members to share their experiences of international touring. • Hold a sector-wide in-person conference (a version of the Theatre & Touring Symposium) in 2022. • Review Live to Digital research and assess if an update is required.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touring Working Group to continue to meet. • Producing, Presenting and Touring Handbook continues to be available online. 		

Training and events, including UK Theatre Awards

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit the training and events offers of external industry bodies and agencies and identify any areas where we could promote their courses, and draft proposals for new services where no provision exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our members' and the sector's training needs, budget capability and training appetite. • Develop and propose a one-year strategy for the training and events programme. • Produce a schedule for eligible productions for the 2022 UK Theatre Awards. • Review and clarify judging process and criteria for UK Theatre Awards, referencing socio-cultural lens and global (decolonised) theatrical cannon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the next UK Theatre Awards in Autumn 2022. • Regularly review sector needs and consider programming additional webinars on TheatreMeansBusiness.info.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote relevant partner and sponsor webinars to support sector recovery and resilience on TheatreMeansBusiness.info. • First season of TheatreMeansBusiness.info webinars, all captioned, continue to be available for free. • Continue to embed best practice relating to access, inclusion and sustainability within event delivery. • Continue to increase the diversity of trainers, facilitators and contributors to UK Theatre events. 		

Workforce and wellbeing

Short term (next 3 months)	Medium term (3-12 months)	Long term (12+ months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Theatre Helpline services and function (including investigating confidential whistleblowing element) and test additional service elements over next 12 months. Develop a programme of wellbeing webinars to support all levels of the sector with personal and professional resilience Develop guidance on flexible working/working from home in partnership with PiPA. Lobby for financial support for freelancers. Policy work focussing on delivering flexibilities for apprenticeships. Continue to raise money for the Theatre Artists Fund and distribute it to those in the sector in need. Form a long-term strategy for freelancer support to include connecting with freelance networks and supporting data collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input into discussions on the long-term future for the Theatre Artists Fund in response to ongoing freelancer need (this work led by Theatre Development Trust). Policy work focussing on socioeconomic inclusion and levelling up. Lobby to make T Level placements work for the sector. Encourage member participation in Discover! Creative Careers Week in Autumn 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy focus on technical post-16 education. Conduct a sector survey on mental health and wellbeing in collaboration with Mind to create benchmark data and identify priority needs.
Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to fully fund the Theatre Helpline. Maintain TheatreSupport.info, an online hub of mental health, wellbeing and financial resources. Wellbeing Committee to meet quarterly to develop and steer work to improve the mental health of the sector. Continue to provide strategic support to Get into Theatre. Continue to encourage theatre workers to sign up as Inspiring Future Theatre Ambassadors. Strategy partner of Parents and Carers in Performing Arts. Continue to support the UK Research and Innovation's MARCH Network. Maintain a publicly available ongoing record of all SOLT and UK Theatre's work to develop the theatre and performing arts workforce. 		