



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ

4 September 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

Support for the live events sector

Following a very concerning conversation with my constituents who work in the sector, as well as our locally based family-run businesses, I am writing to encourage you to consider the challenges faced by the live events industry.

Live events from major festivals and landmark theatres, to grassroots and business events have been disrupted by the pandemic. Given the ongoing restrictions imposed on leisure events, venues throughout the country are suffering, and without major immediate support from the Government the entire supply chain is at risk of collapsing.

Wealden is proud to host a great number of live events across the constituency every year, bringing a great boost to our local economy with revenues from tourism, transport, and hospitality sector. Amongst others, we are home to two award-winning festivals: the Black Deer Festival in Eridge - a unique Americana and country music festival, and the Elderflower Fields Family Festival, designed for a wild weekend of adventure in our beautiful countryside. Moreover, Wealden is home to technicians who are behind major events in London, as well as our neighbouring Brighton, Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells.

During ordinary times, the live events industry is highly profitable and does not require Government support. However, due to the Covid-19 crisis, the UK's best technicians and businesses in the live events industry are currently on red alert with one million professionals at risk of losing their jobs. Whilst the £1.57 billion package to arts venues is extremely appreciated, I would like to draw your attention to those that make events venues run, and consider further support for them. Without additional support for the supply chain, the UK is in danger of losing its global position as a leader in world-class events.

The sector was one of the first to close at the outset of the pandemic and given the ongoing restrictions regarding large-scale gatherings and events, it cannot resume its work. Whilst the ultimate priority must be to keep the public safe, social distancing measures make it impossible for the industry to operate and there is only a limited scope of events and jobs that can be transferred online.

I would like to encourage you to consider further support measures such as sector-specific furlough support, extension of support for freelancers and grants for companies in the supply chain that cannot operate. Your support would be most welcomed by the most affected businesses and individuals in Wealden.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "N Ghani".

Nusrat Ghani MP