



Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 6188 website www.parliament.uk/cms

Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

By email

27 April 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Extension of pilot scheme and associated liabilities to large events this summer

The DCMS Committee first recommended in July 2020 that the Government establish a long-term pandemic reinsurance scheme to mitigate the risks of Covid-related cancellations. Since then, the events and insurance industries have proposed a range of solutions for how Government-backed insurance for events might work. However, the Government refuse to correct the market failure in the commercial insurance market and give events the confidence they need to go ahead this summer.

This has resulted in sold-out festivals in receipt of the Culture Recovery Fund cancelling for a further year, and urgent warnings that events including the Great North Run will be forced to follow suit. If, as seems increasingly likely, more events this summer simply fall off the calendar because they lack insurance, the Government's inaction will be solely to blame. The failure to back events due to take place after 21 June also undermines the investment being made in piloting the safe return of events, and the Government's roadmap towards lifting restrictions on that date.

The Government have acknowledged that pilots held under the Events Research Programme require backing in case they are forced to cancel. We therefore propose extending the Events Research Programme and the liability available to the pilot events under it to a wider, yet defined, selection of events scheduled for after 21 June. This would enable the country to enjoy a greater number of culturally significant events this summer, support the economic recovery of the events industry and its supply chains, and build on the investment already being made into the pilots.

While our preference remains for a comprehensive sector-wide insurance scheme, a targeted intervention for 20 to 30 more pilot events over the summer is better than nothing. In selecting these events, the Government should have regard to:

- The size and capacity of events, ensuring support for a range of grassroots, mid-scale and large events;
- The scope of events, including sport, literature and a range of performing arts;
- Ensuring an equitable distribution of events across the cities and regions of all four nations of the UK;
- The benefits of the events to their local communities and economies; and
- The staffing needs of the events to ensure there is a critical mass of work for suppliers and freelancers.

Given the urgency of this issue, we look forward to receiving your thoughts on these proposals by 10 May.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Knight MP
Chair, DCMS Committee

CC Prime Minister, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP;
Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen MP