

MEDIA STATEMENT

Friday 12th June 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BVEP warns of catastrophic and irreversible consequences for the UK events industry without immediate practical opening guidelines being provided by the UK Government

Further delay could cost over £53 billion of GDP and the loss of over 500,000 jobs

The Business Visits & Events Partnership, the advocacy group for the UK's £70 billion events industry, has today warned of 'a catastrophic and irreversible' impact to the industry if the government further delay publishing clear and practical guidelines on the opening of the UK's vital events sector and relax the current two metre physical distancing rule.

The warning comes as the UK events industry continues to face further uncertainty over the release date of the long awaited guidance for the events industry. Also, and in light of the huge debate taking place over the current two metre physical distancing measure, the BVEP has decided to share the outcome of evidence that it has gathered, and shared with government, from its partner organisations on the business impacts of social distancing measures and the current lack of guidance, with a clear threat to over £53 billion of GDP and the loss of over 500,000 jobs.

Simon Hughes, Chair of the BVEP, said "We have been providing advice and information to government for almost 4 months now, responding to requests for information and data and working with many of our partners to produce really fast responses and feedback on many of the measures that have been put in place to support businesses. Yet we are now expected to continue waiting for decisions to be made over the release of guidance for the entire visitor economy, and a start date for the event industry to begin rebuilding our significant contribution to that economy, which we now consider to be unacceptable.

"There are only three countries in the world currently operating on the two metre social distancing model – Canada, Spain and the UK. This is a risk based assessment, not a rule founded on the best available guidance. It is also putting the UK under a massive competitive disadvantage, as other competitive markets open up ahead of us with different protocols and regimes to help manage the risks in a variety of ways that don't rely exclusively on social distancing measures.

"If clear guidance that allows the event industry to open up safely is not received by the end of June at the very latest, our world class industry, which has taken decades to build, will be decimated. Based on the evidence that we've seen from across the whole industry the overall loss of GDP, if we

have to operate with the current two metres of physical distancing will be £53 billion, while at 1 metre it will be £42.5bn. Based on achieving only 25% of potential business in the two metre scenario, this puts over 500,000 jobs at risk.”

Sentiment within the events industry has shifted in recent days, with many of our partners finding the current situation intolerable, given the potential calamitous consequences. There is now a clear view from within the BVEP that if government cannot give us a clear date for reopening, supported by practical guidance that provides us with really effective ways of managing risk and creating confidence amongst all our clients, guests and visitors, then we call for the government to get out of the way and leave it to the experts in the event industry. We’ve heard people promising world class solutions during this crisis – but everyone in the event industry knows that as a sector we actually deliver organised events around the globe that are world class, brilliantly organised, safe, secure and which deliver economic and cultural benefits, drive our industrial strategy, secure jobs and cement our international reputation, so now is the time to allow us to do that.

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Notes to editors

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About the BVEP

The Business Visits and Events Partnership’s (BVEP) vision is to support sustainable growth for the UK’s £70 billion UK Events Industry. BVEP’s mission is to support growth across the entire sector via advocacy, networking, collaboration and a collective voice.

BVEP’s objectives are to:

- Operate an umbrella organisation to represent, promote and further the interest of member organisations involved in the United Kingdom Events Industry
- Advance the interests, standing, quality, sustainability and growth of the United Kingdom Events’ Industry
- Seek greater collaboration across the Events’ Industry sectors on common issues
- Forge close links with Government departments, including devolved Governments where possible via representation that can influence favourable policies towards the Industry. In particular, maintain strong relationships with key sponsoring departments, DCMS, DIT and BEIS
- Seek a stronger link with the Creative Industries and other related sectors
- Encourage joint events
- Increase the focus on professionalism and skills development

BVEP Partners

- ABPCO (Association of British Professional Conference Organisers)
- AEME (Association for Events Management Education)
- Business Travel Association
- Core Cities

- Events Industry Alliance (AEO, AEV, ESSA)
- Events Industry Forum
- EMA (Event Marketing Association)
- EVCOM (Event & Visual Communications Association)
- HBAA (Hotel Booking Agents Association)
- ICCA (International Congress & Convention Association)
- London & Partners
- Meetings Industry Association
- Meet in Ireland
- MPI
- NOEA (National Outdoor Events Association)
- PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association)
- PSA (Production Services Association)
- Tourism Northern Ireland
- VisitBritain
- Visit Wales
- VisitScotland Business Events