



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Ministerial Support Team
4th Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

E: enquiries@dcms.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dcms

5 February 2021

Ms Juliet Price
juliet.price@hbbaa.org.uk

Our Ref: TO2020/26801

Dear Ms Price,

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 November to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), regarding support for the business events, accommodation and meetings sectors. I am replying as a member of the Ministerial Support Team. Please accept my apologies for the delay in you receiving a reply.

We are aware that the business events and exhibition sector and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Government measures to control the spread of COVID-19. We also recognise that the current restrictions are having a further significant impact on the ability to trade.

At every point we have said our plan to reopen society and the economy is conditional. Crucially, it relies on continued progress against COVID-19. We appreciate this is an extremely difficult situation for the sector. I know the delay to the reopening timeline for business events and conferences will have been deeply disappointing to many businesses throughout the events industry.

National lockdown restrictions have been in place in England since 6 January. The government's COVID-19 Secure guidance for the visitor economy, which has been updated to reflect the current situation, can be viewed [here](#). The government's broader national restrictions guidance is [here](#).

Permitted venues, including exhibition and conference centres, can hire out function and event spaces for essential work, education and training purposes, where these events cannot reasonably be conducted remotely. However, they must not host conferences, exhibitions, trade shows, private dining events or banquets.

In-person meetings for work, training or education purposes should only take place where they cannot be delayed or reasonably be conducted remotely, and only where social distancing can be maintained and the venue can demonstrate it has followed COVID-19 guidance.

While the activities outlined above can happen when absolutely necessary, they are strongly discouraged during this new national lockdown to help slow the spread of the virus.

In response to the restrictions, the Chancellor has confirmed how the government will support businesses and individuals through this period - including the extension of various government-backed loans, new business grants and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will remain open until 30 April 2021. The government will continue to pay 80% of the salary of employees for hours not worked until the end of April. Similarly, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant covering the November to January period is worth 80% of average profits, up to £7,500, and there will be a fourth grant covering February 2021 to April 2021.



Through the Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes, businesses which are legally required to close due to the new restrictions will receive up to £3,000 per month.

Many eligible businesses in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors which are not required to close but which have suffered from reduced demand due to local restrictions will receive grants through the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) scheme, with funding of up to £2,100 per 28 days. Local authorities are best placed to determine local needs for supporting recovery, and whilst the Government has set suggested criteria for this funding, local authorities will be allowed to determine exactly which businesses to support.

On 5 January, the government announced [one-off top up grants](#) for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the spring. This is in addition to the monthly Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed).

The Chancellor also announced that local authorities in England will be given an additional £594 million discretionary funding to support their local businesses. This builds on the £1.1 billion discretionary funding which local authorities in England have already received to support their local economies and help businesses impacted.

Local authorities can determine how much funding to provide to businesses through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme, and exactly which businesses to target.

The guidance for ARG funding encourages local authorities to develop discretionary grant schemes to help those businesses which - while not legally forced to close - are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions put in place to control the spread of COVID-19. This could include - for example - businesses which supply the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors, or businesses in the events sector.

Businesses and individuals should check [Gov.uk](#) to explore the full range of support measures available to them.

We are alert to significant challenges facing businesses and workers in the business events industry. We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Tourism Industry Council and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to monitor the situation.

We are looking into how we can reopen larger business events as soon as it is safe to do so, and the business events pilots we carried out in September will ensure that the correct advice and guidance is put in place to help us achieve this.

My Department regularly engages with events stakeholders to assess the issues being faced and to develop means of offering support, including on the issue of insurance provision. The Government is also in continual dialogue with the insurance sector on its response to COVID-19.

We encourage HBAA to continue feeding information into the Department via the Business Visits and Events Partnership.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Suzie Carney
Ministerial Support Team

