

Arts Advocacy Toolkit

Make Your Voice Heard

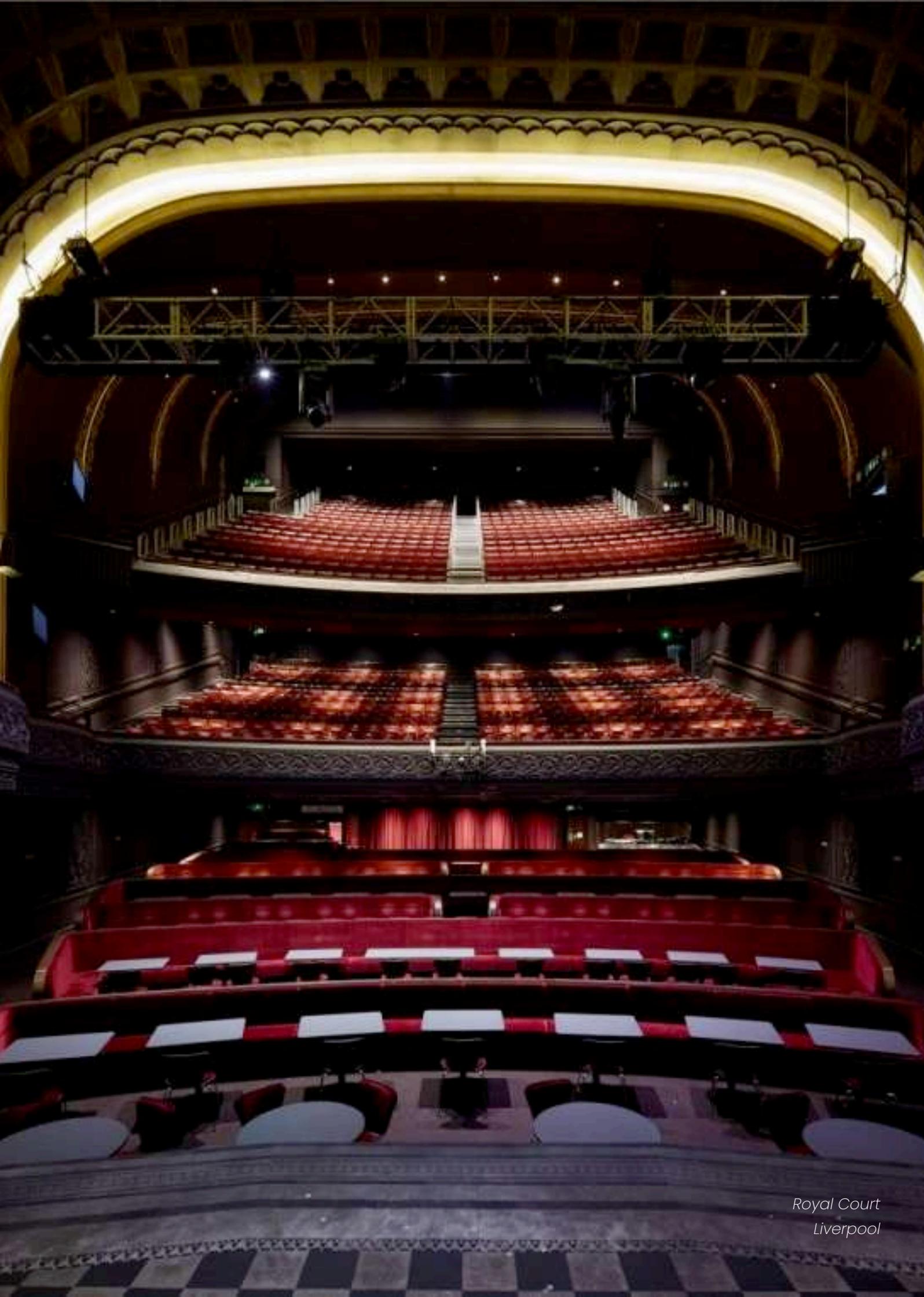


Whether you are a receiving house, producing house, show films or exhibit works of art, when it comes to getting your questions, concerns and opinions seen, read, and answered, you and your colleagues are the most important elements in your post COVID-19 recovery success.

To assist you with this Ticketsolve have joined together with other organisations to create a toolkit to ensure your voice is heard.

Current as of Thursday 27th May 2020, 10:00am

Please note, this is a working document. Things are very fluid at the moment so we will update this toolkit as more information becomes available and as the Working Group comes up with more ideas that can be implemented.



Royal Court
Liverpool

Introduction

As everyone is aware, the first half of 2020 has been unprecedented in UK and global history. Whilst the immediate known impacts of the Covid-19 health crisis – closure, cancellations, postponements etc. – have largely been overcome, another potentially bigger issue is becoming increasingly apparent and concerning for the cultural sector i.e., where does society's vital sector fit within any larger lockdown easing plan, if at all?

So far here is what we do know: it is likely that all events will require social distancing and increased hygiene measures leading to decreased income and increased expenditure.

What we don't know? Pretty much everything else. What exactly does re-opening look like for the arts industry? When will guidelines for re-opening be released? Is it even financially viable to re-open even if it is allowed? Will there be any concessions or aid to help facilitate the monumental task of getting a once thriving industry solvent once more?

Of course, permission to once more open the doors is welcome, but in order to protect artists, staff and audiences effectively it is essential that we receive leadership from the government along with **clarity** and **direction** on what re-opening means and what is required specifically for arts and cultural organisations.

We also need **funding** and **support** to make sure the arts sector across the UK survives not just the next six to eight months – but also flourishes into the future.

We know the value of our organisations to the communities we work within – government needs to understand this too.

Moving forward it is felt that we need to have a voice to ensure the arts and culture sector is not sidelined when lockdown exit strategies are put into place.

It has been no surprise that during lockdown people have turned to the arts for inspiration, mental support, personal development and enjoyment. Our venues, artists & producers represent the core of artistic endeavour in the UK community and need to be ready to serve our audiences when circumstances permit.

To safeguard the future of the arts we must advocate for ourselves and to help us do this, we have done two things:

1. **Arts Advocacy Working Group** – this group is comprised of representatives from a variety of theatres and arts venues across the UK, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The aim of this group is to work together with others across the arts landscape to come up with realistic solutions to the problems facing the industry as a result of this health crisis. More voices equal more power, so please join us! Drop an email to workinggroup@ticketsolve.com to become a part of the solution.
2. **Arts Advocacy Toolkit** – this toolkit is about giving the arts a voice. We have included a number of tips, ideas and examples of ways to get your voice heard. This toolkit isn't just for Ticketsolve customers either, anyone can use the ideas here to start advocating, so please share far and wide.

We cannot afford to sit back right now and expect clarity down the line. We hope this toolkit and the working group provides you with the spark to take action and ensure your voice heard, understood and acted upon.

We welcome the Culture Secretary's announcement of the Cultural Renewal Taskforce which will go a long way to bring clarity during this uncertain time. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/culture-secretary-announces-cultural-renewal-taskforce>

Kai Aberdeen

General Theatre Manager
Princes Theatre

Paul Fadden

Managing Director
Ticketsolve



Tips For Kickstarting Advocating for your Organisation

We've gathered a few tips and ideas to think about when you engage in advocacy. The below is focused on communication tips that are engaging and will capture and hold policy makers' attention.

Keep in mind MPs and Ministers receive **a lot** of letters and correspondence each week – and they will be receiving even more right now given the health crisis. It is important to make sure your communications are clear and concise but also stand out from the rest.

More Voices = More Power

A big part of getting heard is the number of voices you can draw into your cause. We've started a working group of arts organisations to help parse through all the various challenges the arts industry is facing right now, from what re-opening might look like to advocacy and funding. You can get involved by dropping us a line at workinggroup@ticketsolve.com.

In addition to getting involved with the working group, we'd encourage you to get in touch with other arts organisations in your area or region as well; working together we'll have a powerful voice to ensure the arts are part of any policy conversation. Involving as many arts and cultural organisations we can is the best way to get our collective voices heard, so please share this document with others!



Writing an Email or Letter

One simple way to be heard is to write to your MP (find your MP here: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>). While there is merit in writing to the Minister for Culture, your MP is there to listen to the issues and concerns of their constituency and community. Your MP is your best avenue to success, especially if other arts and cultural organisations in your area also join the campaign. If you are in [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) or [Wales](#) may wish to reach out, it's vital that they contact their Assembly & local authority representatives (however, it is important to note that many local authority venues in NI are owned & operated by the councils).

For a campaign like this (given the current circumstances), email is probably your best bet.

Things to think about:

1. If you are a civic theatre, it is a good idea to first consult with Heads of Departments and Chief Executives before contacting MP's. You'll need to get their input and permission first.
2. Check how your MP should be addressed (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr, Sir, Rt. Hon) You can check by looking up your MP on the official Parliament website: www.parliament.uk.
3. Check the website [They Work For You](#) where you can find lots of details about your MP and particularly their voting record, which will help you to write a persuasive email.
4. Educate them about who you are and the role your organisation plays in the community.
5. Be succinct – they get lots of correspondence so keep it brief and to the point.
6. Write to your MPs about your specific concerns. Writing to MPs has a greater likelihood for a response and action.
7. Don't send a template letter. While mass emails using templates might seem like a great way to get your message across fast, it won't engage your MP and likely they will ignore it. You need to tell your story and help your MP understand your particular priorities and concerns. We have included example letters and paragraphs that

might be useful when crafting your messages.

8. It is easy to talk about problems, but remember MPs don't know your needs as well as you do – so come with **solutions**. You are far more likely to get a positive response – and a solution that fits with your needs – if you go to your MP with ideas on how to best solve your issues rather than just presenting a list of problems. Without your input, you could get solutions, but they will likely be less than ideal.
9. Be sure you are clear about what you want your MP to do next. What exactly would help you and your specific organisation?
10. Ask if you can include them in your mailing lists.
11. Use video and images – and especially data – to strengthen your arguments. Data particularly will help keep them updated and informed about current problems faced by venues in their constituencies. In the next section, we've outlined some key statistics and data you can use to build your argument, including some links that are useful when pulling your data from Ticketsolve.
12. Ask for a response. Tell them you look forward to receiving their response and that you are excited to work with them to keep the heart of UK arts and culture beating.

After You've Sent Your Mail

1. Follow up with a phone call if you don't hear back.
2. Share your letter and campaign on social media before and after you get a response, and remember to tag your MPs during the whole of the campaign.
3. Set up a virtual meeting with your MP and/or local council and other area venues, theatres, festivals and arts organisations. And as soon as reopening is possible, extend an invitation to them to visit your venue.

But Wait There's More!

1. You can sign an online petition to further your support.
 - A. [Support for artists and arts organisations](#) (The Parliamentary [petition](#) calling for more support for events has enough signatures for debate in Parliament, so it is worth signing and spreading the word about these).
 - B. [Open letter to EU for support of arts and cultural sector](#)
2. Submit your thoughts to Parliament. [Call for evidence: Impact of Covid19 on DCMS Sector](#)
3. Participate in a benchmarking survey.
[Purple Seven and TRG Arts Survey](#)
[Creative Industries Federation Survey](#)
[List of various other UK arts industry surveys](#)
4. Survey your customers - getting a temperature read on your customers and how they are feeling is also important when making your case to the government. We've included an example survey in Appendix A.
5. Get your audiences on board. Your best cheerleaders are your customers. You can use social media to help create a campaign and build support amongst your various audiences. Even a simple email to your Members and Friends can work well. Below are some examples of Creative Industries Federation's, campaign #OurWorldWithout which highlights the central role of arts and culture in societies.



Additional Information

Scotland

There are a number of great resources and lobby organisations within Scotland. Culture Counts has already been [involved with roundtable discussions](#) with government working specifically on funding and supports.

It would still be valuable to contact your MSP regards clarity on re-opening and any specific challenges you might be facing which are not covered by the current funding and supports.

Links to Government

You can search for your MSP here: <https://www.parliament.scot/msps.aspx>

You can get in touch with [Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Economy Fair Work and Culture](#)

You may also want to get in touch with [Dr Heather Holmes Strategic Policy Manager Creative Industries at The Scottish Government](#)

Support and Advice

There are a number of [supports available through Creative Scotland](#) and [Creative Scotland](#) are in contact with government working on funding and supports.

In addition, [Culture Counts](#) (managed by the [Federation of Scottish Theatres](#)) is currently [conducting a Covid19 impact survey](#) which will inform the steering group involved in planning.

They have also provided excellent [links for live enquiries](#) which are worth checking out.

This [Advocacy Guide](#) will also be useful when creating your advocacy campaign.

Other organisations and resources include [Arts and Business Scotland](#) and [Creative Carbon Scotland](#)

Data and Stats

[Culture Counts has a great store of data and information](#) that you can use when advocating for your organisation.

Some key stats for Scotland

- 77,140 jobs in Scotland are within the creative sector
- £4.9 billion towards Gross Value Add
- 78.1% adults participated in the arts in Scotland (12 months 2017)
- 84.5% adults attended arts events in Scotland (12 months 2017)
- 1845 arts business births in Scotland

**source: <https://culturecounts.scot/culture-counts-2020>*

Northern Ireland

Links to Government

You can find your MLAs here: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas/>

[Minister for Communities Ms. Deirdre Hargey](#) contact details.

Support and Advice

[Arts Council NI has provided advice and resources](#) for arts and cultural organisation operating in Northern Ireland.

[Arts and Business is also providing additional resources.](#)

Arts Matter has several [campaign packs and letter examples you can use.](#)

There also seems to be a [multi-step plan being put into place for Northern Ireland](#), but clarity is still need.

Data and Stats

The [statement published by Arts Collaboration Network](#) has some great information you can include in your advocacy campaign.

[From Arts Matter NI data](#)

- 81% of the public believe the Arts enrich the quality of our lives
- 75% of the public agree that there should be public funding for the Arts
- The number of adults engaging in the Arts has grown to 79%
- 70% of people living in the most deprived areas engage in the Arts
- 96% of young people engage in the Arts
- 87% of the public appreciate that the Arts attract tourists
- 52% of disabled people engage in the Arts

Communities NI also has [several interesting published statistics](#) you can use in your campaigns.

Some [key findings of Covid19 impacts have already been published by Theatre and Dance NI](#):

- Financial impact on NI artists is 'severe and immediate'
- average anticipated loss of earnings for NI artists over 3-month period (March-May) is £3,756
- average anticipated loss of earnings for NI arts organisations over 3-month period is £36,714

- total anticipated loss of earnings to NI arts organisations over 3-month period is £3.97 million
- immediate and direct impact on provision of all arts services. This includes arts-led community engagement work, placing at greater risk vulnerable groups in NI society, such as older people with dementia and young people with poor mental health and well-being, and potentially compromising important peace-building work.

Some other key data from this [Stage article](#) and [this one including Wales](#).

Wales

You can find members of Senedd here: <https://senedd.wales/en/Pages/Home.aspx>

Links to Government

[There are also several supports and other advice](#) which may be relevant to you.

Support and Advice

[Arts Council Wales](#) has a number of resources and advice available for arts and cultural organisation in Wales.

Creu Cymru has also [participated in several joint letters](#), so worth checking these as well when crafting your advocacy campaign.

Data and Stats

[Arts Council Wales](#) are looking for Covid19 impact statements. If you would like to participate, you can email them here: coronavirus@arts.wales to share your story. The Arts Council also provides a number of [key data points on attendance and participation in the arts in Wales](#).

Some other key data from this Stage article [including Wales](#).

*Photo by Jonatan
Moerman on Unsplash*



Data and Statistics to Make Your Argument

Using data and statistics in your campaign will strengthen your arguments for support. Below are a few examples of the type of data you can include in your email campaign.

Impact of the Arts

The following statistics have been taken from the report [Economic Contribution of UK Arts and Culture](#), from The Creative Industries Federation. For more statistics and to see the full report follow the link above where you will also find the original sources for the data provided.

Based on the Arts Council England report commissioned from the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR), the arts and culture industry in 2016 was responsible for:

- £21.2bn in direct turnover
- £10.8bn in Gross Value Added (GVA), with £8.6bn of this generated by the market segment of the industry and the remaining £2.2bn contributed by the non-market organisations
- 137,250 jobs
- £6.1bn in employee compensation

When indirect and induced effects are also added in, the arts and culture industry is estimated to have supported £48bn in turnover, £23bn in Gross Value Added (GVA), 363,713 jobs and £13.4bn in employee compensation.

**includes book publishing, sound recording and music publishing, performing arts, artistic creation and operation of arts facilities*

Source: CEBR/Arts Council England report, April 2019

“EMPLOYMENT IN ARTS & CULTURE”

- Estimated number of UK jobs in museums, galleries and libraries in 2018: 89,000
- Estimated number of UK jobs in music, performing and the visual arts: 296,000

Source: [Economic estimates of DCMS Sectors, Employment, June 2019](#).

LONDON & UK THEATRES ENJOY ROBUST 2018

Theatres in London and across the UK attracted more than 34m visitors in 2018, generating ticket revenues of £1.28bn from 62,945 performances, according to figures from UK Theatre and the Society of London Theatre.

In London theatres, on average 77.5 per cent of available seats were filled, compared to 61 per cent in venues covered by the UK Theatre group.

Source: [SOLT, UK Theatre release](#)

Published: January 2019.

Will Audiences Come Back?

[Indigo](#), an arts consultancy in the UK launched the After the Interval Survey gathering audience responses from participating organisations ranging from Opera Companies to small and large venues, including Concert Halls, Theatres and Arts Centres. To date, over 40,000 audience responses have been gathered from audiences across the arts.

The results have been sobering:

- Only 15% of people are still actively booking tickets for future events – and those that are, are not booking for events happening before September, and a significant percentage (21%) not until 2021.
- Only 20% of audiences would return to venues ‘just because they open again’ – others may stay away on Government or health advice (53%), or just ‘prefer’ to stay away until they feel safe (26%). For over 65s the initial figure saying they would return is only 15%.

- The measures that would make audiences feel most safe in returning to venues include avoiding long queues (75%), limiting capacities (75%) and socially distanced seating (66%).

The survey is still ongoing, so more data is expected, which we will be able to update here. In appendix XXXX we have included an example survey you can use to check in with your audiences to get a better understanding of situation and feelings about returning.

Impact of Covid-19 Related Closures on the Arts Sector

There are also several other benchmarking surveys that are ongoing looking at the impacts of Covid-19 on the arts community. We will report results as soon as we have them.

Data From Your Ticketing System

In addition, you can add in your own data by running some simple reports in your ticketing system. If you are a Ticketsolve customer, you can get a variety of useful data through reports. Below are a few links to Zendesk, where you can find detailed information of the types of reports you can run.

For almost any type of data you are looking for you will need to [run a report within Ticketsolve](#). If you want to gather data, for example, looking to compare sales figures from March to date 2020 versus last year (2019) you can run a [comparative report](#). [Sales reports are also useful](#) if you want to look at any specific periods, genres or shows. Refund and attendance data may also be useful for making your case, which you can access via Reports in the Sales Reports subtab, called Refunds By Event Report. If you would like additional help in gather data please get in touch with us by submitting a ticket via Zendesk.

Sample Letters/Emails

The below sample letters have been adapted from examples provided by The Arts Council England. Please note, these are guides only, you can adapt these letters in any way that makes sense for your organisation and best argues your specific case.

Sample 1: Councillor

Councillor [Title first name surname] Address line 1

Address line 2

[Date]

Dear Councillor [surname],

There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about. I am writing to you today in my capacity as the [job title] of [organisation], an [theatre, arts centre, museum etc.] in your [district/county] but also as part of a bigger non-partisan initiative taking place across the UK, to bring a voice for the arts in these challenging times.

I am incredibly passionate about the provision of live theatre and the arts and the wider benefits it bestows upon the local community and commerce. Because of this I want to share with you the very real and disastrous consequences the Covid-19 health crisis has had on our business and will likely have for the foreseeable future. I would like to share some ideas on how we can work together to support the arts and culture sector in our community, which I have outlined below. It is my fervent hope that with your support local theatres and arts venues can overcome the many challenges currently faced with closures and even eventual re-openings.

[Organisation] makes a significant contribution to the local economy. [Write about your economic contribution e.g. how many people do you employ? What's your annual turnover? Do you provide skilled employment e.g. apprenticeships? Do you attract tourists who then spend money in local restaurants, hotels and bars?]

[Organisation] is a valuable part of the local community and helps to make [district/county] a place where people want to live and work. [Write about your social contribution e.g. do you run projects to increase health and well-being? Has your organisation helped

to attract other investment to make the area better? Are you an important community hub? Explain your value to the community and how much the community values you.] [Organisation] plays an important role in education in [district/county]. [Write about your contribution to education e.g. do you run projects with children and young people? Do you work with local schools? If so, how many local children and young people have you reached, and what has been the benefit for them?]

We rely on [Explain your mix: a combination of ticket sales, donations, Arts Council and Local Authority funding] to bring a diverse range of arts and cultural programming to our community. However, the bulk of our revenues come from ticket sales, which given the current closures and cancellations have left sales at zero. [Write about the financial impacts that the closures and cancellations have had. Explain the impact of refunds and strengthen your case with sales, attendance and refund data.]

Arts and culture make a real difference in [district/county]. They also make a powerful contribution to the nation as a whole, adding £7.7 billion to the UK economy for less than 0.1% of Government funding in England. They incubate the talent that drives the commercial creative industries, one of the fastest growing parts of the UK economy. The arts are often an integral part of driving regeneration and create places where people want to live and work. They are a crucial resource that we cannot afford to lose. That is why I value your support.

The ongoing health crisis has had major impacts on the arts and cultural sector as I am sure you are aware. Myself and my colleagues working in the arts very much appreciate all the current governmental supports. And while much of the policy and planning for phased re-opening is welcome news, there is much that is still unclear for the arts industry and some plans that simply may not work for our venue.

Looking at our data and the measures that have been put in place in other countries such as Spain, it is expected that when we are able to re-open we will need to enact social distancing measures (at least) which realistically means a reduction in audience capacity to 30%. This is simply not a financially viable situation for us. This means, a realistic opening may only be possible in December/January and even then the situation remains unclear - especially if there is a second wave of infections in autumn.

I cannot understate the value of your support and request that you consider the following to help bolster and support the arts during this uncertain time.

[This is the space to ask for specific steps for them to take (see the following pages for ideas on the types of paragraphs to include). E.g. clarity on what re-opening really means for the short, medium and long-term in terms of policies, health and safety guidelines (social distancing, masks, hygiene measures) and what specific financial and other supports the arts will need to 1. Meet these requirements 2. Assist with loss of income even when reopening happens (diminished capacity) and 3. Help with efforts to help engage the community and welcome audiences back).]

I appreciate your time and consideration of the unique challenges that the arts and cultural industry is currently facing. My mail is part of a larger non-partisan initiative taking place across the UK, which we hope will bring clarity and support to the arts during the very challenging time.

The arts play a vital role in [district/county]. I hope [Organisation] and I can count on your support at a time when the arts are truly on the edge of the unknown.

I look forward to receiving your response and am excited to work with you to keep the heart of UK arts and culture beating. And hopefully we can welcome you to [Organisation] very soon.

Yours sincerely,



Sample 2: MP

[Title first name surname] MP House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

[Date]

Dear [title surname],

There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about. I am writing to you as the [job title] of [organisation], an [theatre, arts centre, museum etc.] in your constituency, but also as part of a bigger non-partisan initiative taking place across the UK, to bring a voice for the arts in these challenging times.

I am incredibly passionate about the provision of live theatre and the arts and the wider benefits it bestows upon the local community and commerce. Because of this I want to share with you the very real and disastrous consequences the Covid-19 health crisis has had on our business and will likely have for the foreseeable future. I would like to share some ideas on how we can work together to support the arts and culture sector in our community, which I have outlined below. It is my fervent hope that with your support local theatres and arts venues can overcome the many challenges currently faced with closures and even eventual re-openings.

[Organisation] makes a significant contribution to the local economy. [Write about your economic contribution e.g. how many people do you employ? What's your annual turnover? Do you provide skilled employment e.g. apprenticeships? Do you attract tourists who then spend money in local restaurants, hotels and bars?]

[Organisation] is a valuable part of the local community and helps to make [constituency] a place where people want to live and work. [Write about your social contribution e.g. do you run projects to increase health and well-being? Has your organisation helped to attract other investment to make the area better? Are you an important community hub? Explain your value to the community and how much the community values you.]

[Organisation] plays an important role in education in [constituency]. [Write about your contribution to education e.g. do you run projects with children and young people? Do you work with local schools? If so, how many local children and young people have you reached, and what has been the benefit for them?]

We rely on [Explain your mix: a combination of ticket sales, donations, Arts Council and Local Authority funding] to bring a diverse range of arts and cultural programming to our community. However, the bulk of our revenues come from ticket sales, which given the current closures and cancellations have left sales at zero. [Write about the financial impacts that the closures and cancellations have had. Explain the impact of refunds and strengthen your case with sales, attendance and refund data.]

Arts and culture make a real difference in [constituency]. They also make a powerful contribution to the nation as a whole, adding £7.7 billion to the UK economy for less than 0.1% of Government funding in England. They incubate the talent that drives the commercial creative industries, one of the fastest growing parts of the UK economy. The arts are often an integral part of driving regeneration and create places where people want to live and work. They are a crucial resource that we cannot afford to lose. That is why I value your support.

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Looking at our data and the measures that have been put in place in other countries such as Spain, it is expected that when we are able to re-open we will need to enact social distancing measures (at least) which realistically means a reduction in audience capacity to 30%. This is simply not a financially viable situation for us. This means, a realistic opening may only be possible in December/January and even then the situation remains unclear - especially if there is a second wave of infections in autumn.

I cannot understate the value of your support and request that you consider the following to help bolster and support the arts during this uncertain time.

[This is the space to ask for specific steps for them to take (see the following pages for ideas on the types of paragraphs to include). E.g. clarity on what re-opening really means for the short, medium and long-term in terms of policies, health and safety guidelines (social distancing, masks, hygiene measures) and what specific financial and other supports the arts will need to 1. Meet these requirements 2. Assist with loss of income even when reopening happens (diminished capacity) and 3. Help with efforts to help engage the community and welcome audiences back).]

I appreciate your time and consideration of the unique challenges that the arts and cultural industry is currently facing. My email is part of a larger non-partisan initiative taking place across the UK, which we hope will bring clarity and support to the arts during the very challenging time.

The arts play a vital role in [district/county]. I hope [Organisation] and I can count on your support at a time when the arts are truly on the edge of the unknown.

I look forward to receiving your response and am excited to work with you to keep the heart of UK arts and culture beating. And hopefully we can welcome you to [Organisation] very soon.

Yours sincerely,



Sample 3: Councillor/MP: Email Example

Dear [Councillor/MP Name],

There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

As the [job title] of [organisation], an [theatre, arts centre, museum etc.] in your [district/county], I am deeply concerned about the challenging and uncertain times the arts and cultural sector has found itself in amidst the Covid19 health crisis. I am reaching out today as part of a bigger non-partisan initiative taking place across the UK, to bring a voice to the arts in these difficult times.

I am incredibly passionate about the provision of live theatre and the arts and the wider benefits it bestows upon the local community and commerce. Because of this I want to share with you the very real and disastrous consequences the Covid-19 health crisis has had on our business and will likely have for the foreseeable future. But I am not just interested in outlining the problems. I want to bring some solutions and ideas on how we can work together to support the arts and culture sector in our community, which I have outlined below. It is my fervent hope that with your support local theatres and arts venues can overcome the many challenges currently faced with closures and even eventual re-openings.

[Organisation] makes a significant contribution to the local economy through employment, apprenticeships, educational programmes and turnover. In addition to our diverse community centred programming we are an important community hub and are deeply valued by the community we work in [Add in data and statistics and other support arguments].

While we have a number of income streams (Arts Council funding and donations), we predominantly rely on ticket sales for revenue generation. With the closures and cancellations that we have had since March, our revenue has hit rock bottom and this is before we account for refunds. [Tailor this to your specific venue's situation, use data to back up your point].

We of course are not alone. The entire UK arts and culture community is facing this same situation.

We must act quickly to save this sector which makes a powerful contribution to the nation as a whole, adding £7.7 billion to the UK economy for less than 0.1% of Government funding in England. Commercial creative industries are one of the fastest growing parts of the UK economy.

So what can we do?

I applaud the efforts the government has already made in protecting people working in the arts along with other initiatives, but more needs to be done. Re-opening in autumn of 2020 is unlikely for most arts organisations. Social distancing measures for our venue mean that live performances are simply not financially viable.

This is why we need your urgent support.

[INSERT SPECIFICS HERE. SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE FOR IDEAS]

I appreciate your time and consideration of the unique challenges that the arts and cultural industry is currently facing. My mail is part of a larger non-partisan initiative taking place across the UK, which we hope will bring clarity and support to the arts during this very challenging time.

The arts play a vital role in [district/county]. I hope [Organisation] and I can count on your support at a time when the arts are truly on the edge of the unknown.

I look forward to receiving your response and am excited to work with you to keep the heart of UK arts and culture beating. And hopefully we can welcome you to [Organisation] very soon.

Yours sincerely,

Points to Include in Your Letter

Below are some suggestions for you to use or adapt to fit your individual and unique requirements.

Clarity

Theatres and Cultural establishments will need clear, concise guidelines to operate under to ensure continuity across the country and prevent the possibility of potential misunderstanding and potential abuse by less scrupulous venues.

Direction

It is imperative that theatres and cultural venues know exactly what is required and expected including capacities, social distancing, Risk Assessments along with details of any additional training required to ensure safety of staff and customers alike for example, will there be additional enhanced first aid training required while dealing with someone to prevent the risk of contagion? Will there be direction from the HSE with regards to emergency first aid PPE requirements?

Funding

Additional financial support to theatres and cultural centres along with consideration to increased funding cascading to local councils to enable the stimulation of the consumption of cultural services is needed.

Business Rates Relief

A temporary suspension of the requirement for theatres and other cultural venues to pay business rates would greatly assist with enabling many theatres to stay open whilst undertaking the difficult task of rebuilding after this period of sustained closure.

This is especially important given the requirement for social distancing will mean reduced capacity for venues, and thus a decrease in revenues. In conjunction with reduced

revenues, there will be a requirement for increased expenditure, e.g, additional staff to monitor social distancing, additional cleaning staff, extra hygiene stations, etc.). Arts organisations will need financial support to offset extra expenditures alongside reduced revenues.

Cultural VAT Exemption

Currently, an eligible body for these purposes is the same as for Education except that, in addition, the body must be managed and administered on a voluntary basis by persons who have no direct or indirect financial interest in its activities. It would be beneficial to assist with the regeneration of the cultural sector the aforementioned Exemption be extended to all theatres and cultural venues regardless of charity or voluntary status.

Support

It would of great benefit for all in the arts and cultural sector to be able to contact a government advisor, perhaps in the form of a dedicated helpline to advise on all of the above and to give up-to-date, accurate practices along with offering help and advice in identifying potential liabilities, financial entitlements, grants, loans and concessions.

Social Media

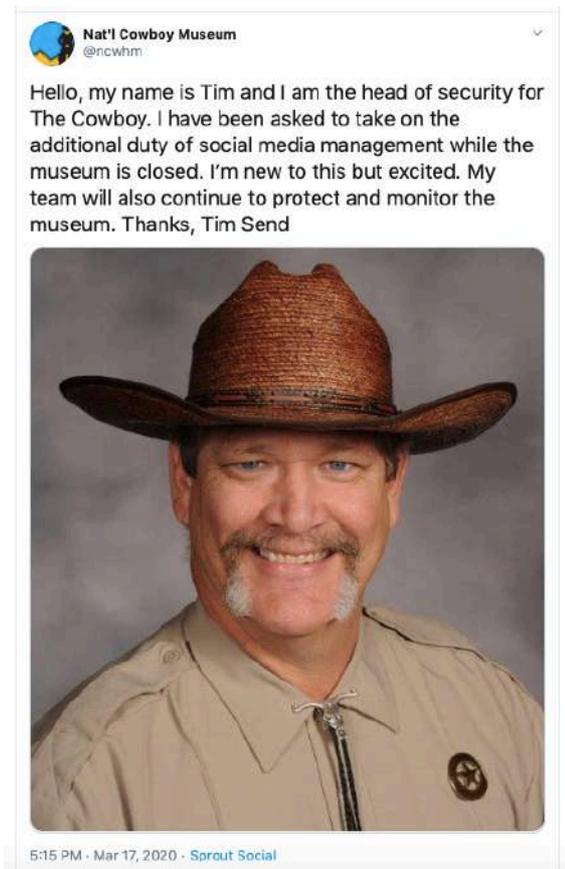
Social media is an important element to your advocacy – especially now – [lockdown has meant an increase in social media usage](#), so it is an important way to make your voice heard and draw your audiences to your cause.

Whatever channels you are using now are the best channels to use for advocacy as well. Don't forget to also use your personal social media accounts to cross post your campaign and encourage others you work with to do the same. Artists, technical crew, front of house – anyone working in the arts should hopefully be interested in helping get the word out. And always tag your MP and Councillors!

Top Tips for Social Engagement

Many of the same rules apply for a social media marketing campaign as they do for an advocacy campaign.

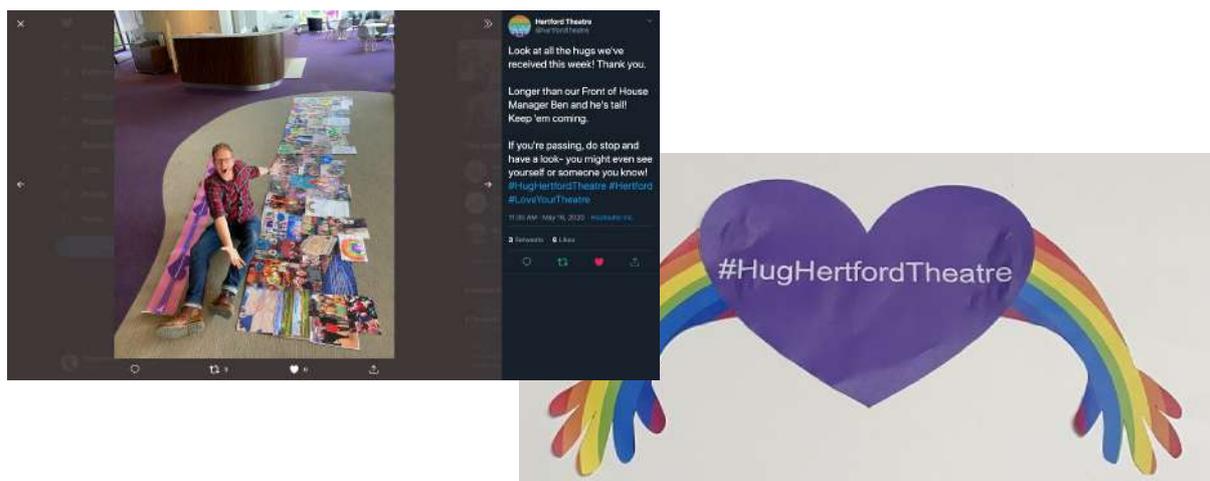
1. **Videos** are a great way to get people interested in your story and grab their attention. Live videos of people checking on empty theatres are really effective. The [example from the Cowboy Museum](#) shows the impact of these types of videos..
2. **Pictures and images** are of course important; empty seats and auditoriums will have a big visual impact.



- User generated content** is the holy grail of social media. Consider asking audiences to share images or memories of a time when they were in your venue. The Getty Museum had great social media engagement with their museum challenge, where audiences were challenged to recreate famous paintings at home.



- Hashtag** everything you do on social. Some examples of hashtags you can use [#savethearts](#), [#welovethearts](#), [#artsrevolution](#), [#helpthearts](#), [#ArtsAloud](#), [#Hearts4Arts](#), [#ArticulatingUK](#), [#Upstart4Arts](#), [#ACause2Celebrate](#), [#CelebrateArts](#), [#ProtectTheArts](#).
- Think outside the box** like Hertford Theatre did with their [#HugsHertfordTheatre campaign](#) where audiences are being encouraged to send in an image or picture to “wrap a hug” around Hertford Theatre.



Another great example is [Black Box Belfast's #SaveOurVenues Campaign](#) which they are doing in conjunction with Music Venue Trust nationwide fundraising campaign.

Resources and References

Aside from the links included above, below are other resources we used in preparing this toolkit.

- Article from 2019, lists MPs with interest in arts, and SOLT and UK Theatre advocacy contacts

<https://uktheatre.org/theatre-industry/news/parliamentary-support-for-the-british-performing-arts/>

- Content resources

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/make-case-art-and-culture/why-art-and-culture-matters>
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/explore-news/local-government-art-and-culture-future>
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/make-case-art-and-culture/create-your-story>

- Policies from around the world with regards to arts and culture and Covid-19

<https://culture360.asef.org/news-events/compendium-cultural-policies-and-trends-covid-19-monitoring-and-resources/>

Appendix A Customer Survey

These questions are for guidance only, you may want to adapt them to your specific venue needs. For best results, keep questions specific and your survey short.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I won't buy tickets for future events as there is insufficient guidance.	1	2	3	4	5
I would buy tickets if there was sufficient guidance on how to attend events.	1	2	3	4	5
I am actively looking to book for future events running in (add time frame, summer, autumn, winter, 2021 etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
I would go to the theatre if theatres were given guidance on keeping me safe	1	2	3	4	5
Local theatres should be supported during this phase	1	2	3	4	5
Local theatres should be supported after the lockdown has lifted	1	2	3	4	5
Theatres are important to the local economy	1	2	3	4	5
Access to theatre and the arts is important to me	1	2	3	4	5
Access to theatre and the arts is important to my community	1	2	3	4	5
I am concerned for the long term viability of my local theatre.	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to hear about am interested in buying tickets for future events.	1	2	3	4	5

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