

WHAT NEXT?

Coronavirus: issues, good practice and information Draft EC 18/03/2020

Table of contents

This document is hyperlinked – click on the section that you would like to read.

Key Updates this week	1
Purpose and origins of this paper	2
Trusted sources of advice	2
Government and NHS advice	2
Government helplines	3
Support from charities and sector support organisations	3
Mental health advice and guidance	4
Advice and statements from funders	6
Arts Council England	6
Statements from Arts Councils in devolved nations	6
Advice and updates from other funders	6
Issues Log – key questions	7
Questions for DCMS Secretary of State	7
What Next? rolling issues log (additional to those included above)	8
Rise in racism and hate crime as a result of coronavirus	9
Good practice suggestions from across the movement	10
Opportunities	11
Other sources of information	12
Creative Solutions	12
Planned activity and official statements from other bodies	12

Key Updates this week

- New advice on social distancing and mass gatherings that affects arts and cultural organisations
- New government pledge for financial support
- What Next? submits key questions for the Secretary of State
- New opportunities for colleagues to connect through Voluntary Arts #CreativeNetwork

Purpose and origins of this paper

This paper originated as notes taken at a What Next? Young Vic meeting on the 11th March. They have been supplemented by e-mails and queries from across the What Next? movement and by changing advice and information as it emerges. This paper represents a snap-shot of the concerns and issues related to Covid 19 coronavirus as faced by colleagues in the arts and cultural sector at the moment of publication.

This is a live document that we will update and share regularly as the situation develops – with Arts Council England, with DCMS, and with others across the movement.

We will add in trusted sources of advice, information and good practice as we receive them.

Please contact lizzie@culturallearningalliance.org.uk if you would like to add or amend anything to this paper, or if you or your organisation are experiencing issues or problems that have not been logged or noted.

Let us know if you have a specific query that you would like an answer for. We will endeavour to pass it on swiftly to a body that can help.

Please do share good practice in terms of HR, governance, contracting, risk, technological and creative solutions, as well as ways that you are supporting wellbeing or challenging racism as a response to this pandemic.

Trusted sources of advice

Government and NHS advice

The latest **public health advice** is available at: www.gov.uk/coronavirus. In addition, more information on specific areas can be found here:

As of 16th March the government advises **social distancing for everyone in the UK:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

This includes the following elements specifically relevant to the arts and cultural sectors:

- Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
- Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to [employer guidance](#) for more information
- Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media

- **Advice for patients** is available on NHS Choices regarding symptoms <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Public Health England has **published guidance on coronavirus for non-clinical settings, including clarifications about mass gatherings:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance#guidance-for-non-clinical-settings>
- **Guidance for employers and businesses -** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>
- **FCO travel advice:** <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
- **European Commission advice** and co-ordination of the european response https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en

Government helplines

HMRC has launched a new helpline to help businesses and self-employed colleagues concerned about paying their tax due to coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-helpline-to-support-businesses-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19>

The **DfE** has set up a dedicated helpline for anyone working in education, from early-years through to universities: <https://schoolweek.co.uk/dfesets-up-coronavirus-helpline-as-education-secretary-advises-schools-to-stay-open/>

Support from charities and sector support organisations

ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) has produced [this workplace guidance](#) for employees and employers.

There is also specific advice, guidance and legal support provided by Unions and sector support organisations. **Do contact these organisations directly for specialist advice:**

- **Incorporated Society of Musicians:** <https://www.ism.org/advice/coronavirus-stay-informed>
- **Equity:** <https://www.equity.org.uk/news/2020/march/coronavirus-advice-to-equity-members/>
- **Independent Theatre Council:** <https://www.itc-arts.org/blog>
- **UK Theatre:** <https://uktheatre.org/theatre-industry/news/theatre-industry-coronavirus-advice/>
- **Musicians Union:** <https://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/News/2020/Mar/advice-for-musicians-Coronavirus-covid-19>
- **Help Musicians:** <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/news/latest-news/advice-relating-to-coronavirus-covid-19>
- **Association for Independent Professionals and the Self Employed:** <https://www.ipse.co.uk/ipse-news/news-listing/coronavirus-ipse-activity-and-advice-freelancers.html>

- **Federation of Small Businesses:** <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/advice-to-small-businesses-and-fsb-members-about-the-novel-coronavirus-covid-19.html>

Bates Wells has produced [this blog](#) which includes useful employment operations advice.

Unlimited has produced this excellent guide to best practice in access for staff with autoimmune conditions: <https://weareunlimited.org.uk/staff-with-autoimmune-conditions/>

Asia Arts Activism: Un-racialising the coronavirus epidemic: <https://asia-art-activism.net/2020/02/21/un-racialising-the-coronavirus-epidemic/>

From NCVO: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus>

- Diabetes UK has provided an [updated information page](#) for people living with diabetes.
- Asthma UK has released a [blog post with advice for people with asthma](#).
- The British Heart Foundation has published [guidance for people with health problems](#).
- The National Eczema Society has offered [advice on handwashing techniques](#) for people with eczema and other skin conditions.
- SignHealth has created [British Sign Language \(BSL\) videos](#) to help deaf BSL users either working in charities or receiving support.
- Carers UK has produced [recommendations for carers](#).
- Housing Justice has issued [specialised advice to homeless shelters](#). Glass Door is emphasising the importance of handwashing and has [boosted their stock of hand gels](#) kept in their vans that move between shelters. [Pathway](#) and [Crisis](#) have called on the government for guidance on how best to protect homeless people against coronavirus.
- Full Fact has generated a [fact check page](#) on covid-19 to help dispel any false information.
- The [Cystic Fibrosis Trust](#), [Primary Immunodeficiency UK](#) and the [Mental Health Foundation](#) have all issued advice and support.

Mental health advice and guidance

- **Mind:** <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- **World Health Organisation guidance on COVID-19 Outbreak:** https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_2

Financial support from the government for businesses and freelancers

In the Budget on the 11th March the Chancellor **outlined a package of £30bn support for public services, individuals and businesses that may experience economic disruption at this time due to COVID-19.**

The guidance can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/871900/Covid-19_Budget_fact_sheet_FINAL.pdf

On 13th March the government published updated and simplified details on how to apply for:

- Universal credit
- Statutory sick pay
- Employment and support allowance

On the evening of March 17th, **the Chancellor made a speech** announcing a further £350bn in grants and loans. These include:

- Business Interruption Loan schemes up to £5m
Cash grants of £10,000 for the 700,000 smallest businesses.
- Three months mortgage holidays for those having difficulties

The speech also includes the following paragraphs:

Following the changed medical advice yesterday, there are concerns about the impact on pubs, clubs, theatres and other hospitality, leisure and retail venues.

Let me confirm that, for those businesses which do have a policy that covers pandemics, the government's action is sufficient and will allow businesses to make an insurance claim against their policy.

But many of those businesses don't have insurance – so we will go further.

I announced last week that for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, with a rateable value of less than £51,000, they will pay no business rates this year.

Today, I can go further and provide those businesses with an additional cash grant of up to £25,000 per business – to help bridge through this period.

Additionally, I also am today extending the business rates holiday to all businesses in those sectors, irrespective of their rateable value.

That means every single shop, pub, theatre, music venue, restaurant - and any other business in the retail, hospitality or leisure sector – will pay no business rates whatsoever for 12 months, and if they have a rateable value of less than £51,000, they can now get a cash grant as well.

Advice and statements from funders

Arts Council England

Arts Council England has set up an official coronavirus information page

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19>

On Sunday 15th March Arts Council England made a series of announcements on twitter:

https://twitter.com/ace_national/status/1239144461218787328?s=19.

They pledged to:

- Refocus some grant programmes to help compensate individual artists and freelancers for lost earnings: this may take about ten days to develop
- Continue to fund National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and Creative People and Places (CPPs), but funding conditions would not apply for at least three months with immediate effect
- Advance grant payments to assist with cashflow

They asked NPOs and CPPs to honour contracts agreed with freelancers/artists and think about what help they can offer communities

On Monday 17th March ACE also announced that

- grant conditions will also be relaxed on live National Lottery Project Grants, and we will shortly publish FAQs on our website to answer further questions.

ACE project-funded organisations / artists should send their queries and information to this email address: Coronavirus-queries@artscouncil.org.uk

Arts Council England will also send regular updates through its social media channels.

Statements from Arts Councils in devolved nations

- **Arts Council Wales:** <https://arts.wales/news-jobs-opportunities/responding-coronavirus-covid-19>
- **Creative Scotland:** <https://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/latest-news/archive/2020/02/coronavirus-advice>
- **Arts Council of Northern Ireland:** <http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/coronavirus-covid-19-advice>

Advice and updates from other funders

This week London Funders drafted a joint statement for any funder (in and out of London) to publicly announce that they stand with their beneficiaries.

<https://londonfunders.org.uk/about/covid-19>

It says that:

'We, along with a wider group of funders, recognise that the covid-19 outbreak is an exceptional event that will have an impact on civil society groups, and want to offer reassurance that we stand with the

sector during this time. We wish to be as helpful as possible during the coming weeks and months so that civil society groups can focus on the vital work of supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. We understand that there will be times when staff and volunteers will not be available, when beneficiaries may need services to be provided in different ways, or when systems need to be flexible to ensure that needs are met’.

The funders pledge to be flexible on activities, funding and dates, and to listen to their grantees. At the time of writing well over 100 funders have signed, including **Esmee Fairbairn, Paul Hamlyn, Garfield Weston, Comic Relief, Youth Music and many local authorities.**

Issues Log – key questions

Questions for DCMS Secretary of State

On 17th March a large number of arts and cultural leaders participated in a phone call with the Rt Hon Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. What Next? was invited to join and to submit questions in writing first. DCMS are working with us to find answers to them. Using information sent through last week by What Next? colleagues, we submitted the following:

- **We need government to urgently and officially call for the closure of cultural and arts organisations.** The current advice recommends that people stop attending, and this has wide-reaching implications for insurance payments and for negotiation with contractors. The period of closure announced should be as defined as possible (with understanding that it may change as the situation develops).
- Cashflow is the major issue for our arts and cultural organisations. **We are calling for urgent assistance from government in the form of interest free loans, immediate business rate relief, a VAT holiday, and/or an extended period of forbearance with pre-existing creditors . We need immediate and substantial provision of funds to organisations/businesses to replace lost income - as per the quantitative easing that enabled banks to survive in 2008.** These organisations are the backbone of the sector and support the livelihoods of many freelancers and microbusinesses – as well as day and night-time economies. It is essential that they survive. Theatre is a thriving business and we will be so again - but this pause could be catastrophic without immediate and simple financial help. **We are also calling on government to extend the ticket refund period from 14 days to 6 months** to help with cashflow.
- Many disabled artists have health conditions that mean they now need to self-isolate for months. **We are calling on government to guarantee a basic income to these vulnerable colleagues now** to reduce stress and anxiety which is making their medical conditions worse.
- **We are calling for the DCMS to co-ordinate planning and discussions with the MHCLG,** to ensure that Local Authorities are supported to help protect the local cultural infrastructure and the local businesses that make up the cultural economy – through co-ordination of a local response and through rate-relief.

- **We are calling on government to support casual staff and those on zero hours contracts with a defined package:** many organisations are choosing to honour existing rotas and contracts but will not be able to pay these indefinitely for services that are not being used, some organisations are not able to pay these staff at all. We understand that Universal Credit will take five weeks to process and so these individuals are in specific jeopardy now.
- We are seeing a significant rise in anxiety and mental health crises, exacerbated by the precarity of many of the jobs in our sector. Large commercial organisations are already offering increased well-being schemes and access to mental health professionals for all their staff. **We are calling on the government to invest in mental health support for the sector which is free at the point of access.**
- Many small and medium-sized organisations are making significant HR decisions without specialist knowledge or without taking legal advice. Although many membership organisations and unions are able to offer some support, this is restricted to those who are paid members, and the resource is finite. **We urgently need a more universal offer of HR and legal advice.**
- Many organisations rely on volunteers to deliver their work. **We are calling on the government to include volunteers in any package of support for the workforce.**
- **We are calling for more clarity for arts and cultural organisations that provide youth and community and other statutory services.** Many are unclear as to whether they should remain open to deliver key services to vulnerable individuals.
- As this situation develops we envisage that there will be considerable strain placed upon our digital infrastructure and capacity as many organisations will be turning to platforms like Whatsapp, Zoom and Skype to fulfil their core business functions. **We are calling for access to dedicated free/ subsidised streaming data for cultural institutions for this period.**
- **We are calling on government to make a strong commitment to a post-crisis stimulus package** as soon as it can. This will help organisations to plan effectively and to reschedule cancelled and postponed work.

What Next? rolling issues log (additional to those included above)

Travel and touring

- Impact on international touring and projects - many are being cancelled or deferred at short-notice
- Travel for artists: getting back to the UK for some, and outward travel cancellations for others – rise in accommodation costs
- International working will be significantly affected. E.g. Chinese schools will not have a summer recess and therefore lost income for these international education projects
- Loss of income from international tourism

Impact on financial health and ability to deliver arts work

- We are seeing behaviour changes from audiences; reduction in attendance, forward ticket sales reducing
- Impact on the markets is affecting investment income
- Impact on volunteers and their willingness / ability to volunteer
- Increased cleaning costs from venues
- Insurance issues. – many policies are unlikely to cover these issues if there are cancellations – is this force majeure? https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_majeure
- Reputational concerns: colleagues are considering closure and cancellations of events because they don't want the adverse PR should an outbreak take place
- There are many micro-organisations made up entirely of freelancers. These organisations will be at significant risk if they have no reserves to manage any extended project timelines
- Some organisations are prohibited from borrowing by their charitable articles. This should be lifted.
- Security concerns for understaffed organisations – some opportunistic thefts of collections already being reported

Impact on individual employees and freelancers

- **Staff on lower pay or on zero hours contracts** are being affected now and many have no work in their diaries
- Many large summer festivals are not yet confirmed - delay in contracting for organisations and freelance individuals – **increased precarity which impacts on mental health**
- In a climate of social distancing / self-isolation, then **disabled freelance artists** are very vulnerable and there is significant fear and anxiety amongst colleagues. Individuals could potentially be isolated, but also unable to go and collect medications. We need a specific plan in place to identify where these colleagues might need support
- **Anxiety management:** anxiety is an underlying medical issue and should be addressed through a sickness /wellbeing policy. We need plans in place to deal sensitively with a significant rise in anxiety

Future considerations

- New relationships will need to be made with corporate sponsors and funders
- Relationships with audiences will need to be considered – how will we entice them back once the crisis is over?

Rise in racism and hate crime as a result of coronavirus

There has been a documented increase in attacks and abuse of Asian communities, and there are so many instances of casual memes and jokes shared in workplace that are racist. There are reports of Asian students not attending classes at universities and of artists being excluded from public events.

As a sector we should look at what is being done structurally to address this. Asian Art Activists have developed a blog of five things that you can do: <https://asia-art-activism.net/2020/02/21/un-racialising-the-coronavirus-epidemic/>.

These include: **educating your colleagues** and your staff members, **not sharing misinformation**, **humanising the information** – sharing the stories of survival and creative ingenuity of artists in Asia: e.g. musicians have been making amazing work in their bedrooms in Wuhan.

Be an ally – take a stand, when you see this verbal abuse – or when people are not sitting next to someone on the tube. Use privilege and support anyone you see being marginalised. There are ways of supporting victims that do not put you in danger.

Think about the stock photo you use on your coronavirus information page, and the language you use.

Good practice suggestions from across the movement

Think about how you might be able to support the most economically vulnerable in our sector to survive the next few months. For example, Unlimited is commissioning **paid blogs** from disabled artists and have developed **micro-commissions** to support self-isolating artists to make work at home.

Develop the best and most robust HR, wellbeing and homeworking and sickness policies possible – work with your board and sector support organisations, and make sure that all senior leaders are aware of how they will apply in a variety of different scenarios as this crisis unfolds.

Colleagues are currently **updating their risk registers and are putting together mitigation plans.**

ACTION: If you have drafted a risk mitigation strategy for coronavirus that you are willing to share, then please send to Lizzie: lizzie@culturallearningalliance.org.uk – thanks to everyone who sent theirs though already. We're working on a way to share.

- Use this opportunity to review your contracting practice and ensure that it meets good sector guidelines.
- Review your insurance policies.
- Use your unions and specialist support organisations for specific advice.
- Assess your use of zero-hours contracts and the support in place for your casual workers.
- Consider including an 'in good faith' clause in your contracts:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_faith_\(law\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_faith_(law))
- Forward planning for moving/rescheduled events is really important - looking for programming windows for when things might be rescheduled and clearly plan / to put them in place.
- We need healthy dialogue between large orgs (operating as businesses) and smaller organisations and individuals who are contracted by them. If possible, there should be compromises which protect both as much as possible. **Consider bringing in your partners to discuss the issues and how you might move forward together.**

- We should see this as an opportunity to look again at how we create a culture in our sector where people feel comfortable talking about their caring needs and their mental health needs.
- Relook at our diversity action plans and think about how we equip all colleagues in our organisations with information language and on how to support and ally Asian colleagues, artists, audiences.
- Explore this opportunity to really connect issues - decolonise the way that we are sharing stories - understanding how the global epidemics are linked to industrialised farming practices etc and Climate Justice - there are many ways to connect these issues and different lenses to use.

Opportunities

The **Arts Marketing Association** are offering free webinars on managing crisis comms and on increasing wellbeing: <https://twitter.com/amadigital>

64million artists: Create to Connect

<http://dothinkshare.com/creative-inspiration/create-to-connect/>

64million artists is trialling two weeks of free, creative challenges from the 23rd of March – for anyone, self-isolating or otherwise

Voluntary Arts is launching a Creative Network!

<https://voluntaryarts.org/creativenetwork>

#CreativeNetwork

This week there are a lot of people feeling isolated, working from home, with events and meetings being cancelled, who might welcome the chance to speak to someone else at this difficult and worrying time. Voluntary Arts has nearly 30 years experience of remote working, working at home and supporting a distributed network of staff, freelancers and volunteers.

From Tuesday 17 March, Voluntary Arts is launching #CreativeNetwork - a daily online get-together open to anyone involved in arts, culture and creativity who would welcome the opportunity to talk to others about dealing with the current situation, the challenges of working from home and what we can do together to make the most of difficult circumstances.

We are starting this open daily Zoom gathering from Tuesday 17 March. After a brief Twitter poll to find the best time of day for this, 9:30 - 10:30 am was selected.

No need to log in, just click the link and smile for the camera. Bear with us if the technology is overwhelmed! It's also BYOB (Bring Your Own Biscuits).

Facebook is launching a Small Business Grants Programme:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/boost/grants>

The Creative Industries Federation is offering three months of free membership:
<https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/free-federation-membership-three-months>

National Trust has made all its parks and gardens free:
<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/news/national-trust-free-coronavirus/>

Other sources of information

Advice and **guidance from freelancers working in the US**:
<https://covid19freelanceartistresource.wordpress.com>

Anti-viral work for freelancers and small businesses:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/142964673673928/>. This online community is sharing tips and ideas with one another, from how to run a digital meeting, to how to talk to your bank managers

Charity Digital have a **run down on some of the most useful online tools for managing a remote workforce**: <https://charitydigital.org.uk/topics/coronavirus-tools-for-managing-a-remote-workforce-7199>

Independent Arts Workers has a good dossier of links and sources of finance:
<http://www.independentartsprojects.com/covid-19-impact-on-arts-workers/>

Creative Solutions

What are the creative solutions that we can develop?

If performances are cancelled can we ask artists to find new ways of reaching audiences? Digital engagement? Filmed closed performances etc. Can we build these into contracts and planning?

ACTION: If you have a creative solution for replacing a cancelled performance / exhibition / show. Please do share with What Next? If there are excellent technological systems you have used, please share them also.

Planned activity and official statements from other bodies

- **Creative Industries Federation**:
<https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/federation-responds-todays-covid-19-announcement-about-social-gatherings>

National Campaign for the Arts statement:
<https://twitter.com/exitthelemming/status/1239660266918477827>