

Written evidence submitted by TheatreDigsBooker

Call for Evidence - Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors

TheatreDigsBooker is an online accommodation service dedicated to the UK Theatre touring industry.

Founded in 2010, TDB has become an integral part of the U.K.'s Theatre industry and has supported over 500,000 nights of successful bookings, directly enhancing the wellbeing of Theatre Professionals as they travel and work away from home.

Uniquely, TDB offers theatre industry specific pricing and support that no other online accommodation service provides. This ensures there are as many suitable, affordable rooms as possible for the numbers of touring professionals working today.

The Prime Minister's announcement on the 16th of March asking the public to "stop going to pubs clubs and theatres" caused an instant shutdown of the theatre industry which had the devastating effect on our business of immediately ceasing all revenue at the same time as a 100% cancellation rate.

We instantly laid off all staff who have since been furloughed under the government's scheme and currently have no staff to process refunds or customer enquiries.

TDB's services are vital to the longevity of the Theatre industry and retaining our network of theatre-focused hosts is essential for the future of touring in the UK.

Fears about Covid-19 are causing many hosts to leave the platform both from the perspective of receiving guests who may pass on infection and from a lack of confidence that the theatre industry will be able to bounce back.

This results in very pessimistic forecasting and a high probability of long-term job losses.

Having a clearly communicated and confident plan from the government covering exactly how and when venues will be able to reopen will allow audiences to book tickets, producers to cast and rehearse shows and touring companies to book accommodation.

This will put revenue back into the industry, build confidence and help to save losing high numbers of wonderful hosts who support the Arts.

Philip Barley
Founder