

Written evidence submitted by PLASA, the Professional Lighting and Sound Association
www.plasa.org

- **The events and entertainment industry has been dramatically affected by the coronavirus pandemic.**
 - **Businesses in the industry need assurance that they can access cash grants for ‘retail, hospitality and leisure businesses’.**
 - **Businesses are reporting that they have lost the vast majority of their work for the year and fear they would not be able to pay back a loan.**
 - **A third of the creative workforce are self-employed, with 60% of those reporting their income will halve this year.**
 - **The self-employed need support, along the lines of the employed to help them and their families.**
1. I am writing on behalf of the Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA) to request more support for both businesses and freelancers in the events and entertainment industry.
 2. Our industry powers the cultural heart of the UK, contributing around £11 billion to the UK economy every year. Our members are the force behind the scenes of all theatres, live music venues, festivals and exhibitions, and their products and services are responsible for some of the most memorable and impressive live events and productions in the world, from the Pyramid Stage of Glastonbury festival to the world-renowned Royal Albert Hall.
 3. The supply-chain of the industry is diverse, encompassing global manufacturers, distributors, rental companies, music and entertainment venues, and a large network of freelancers.
 4. With the wide-spread closure of venues and events around the world, our industry has been devastated over the space of a few days. According to our members survey (we would be happy to share the full results), businesses have lost the vast majority of their work for the year, and with no sign of it returning, this will seriously impact their ability to survive. Although they welcome the Government’s initiative to provide loans, many would appreciate a grant as there is a concern on how they will have the funds in the future to pay back a loan.
 5. Whilst the £300bn rescue plan is very welcome, we are unsure if some of these measures will benefit our members. We are looking for further support and clarity from the UK Government with the following two points:
 6. **Assurances that businesses operating in our sector – who have been directly impacted by the closure of venues and events – will be included in the definition for Business Rates Cash grants for ‘retail, hospitality and leisure businesses.’ (Businesses seeking clarification include rental and hire companies, distributors and suppliers.)**

- 7. Urgent additional support for freelancers and the self-employed, to match the welcome support now available for employers and employees via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.**
8. According to research by the Creative Industries Federation, a third of the UK's creative workforce are self-employed – higher than the 15% national average. Of those surveyed, 60% say their income will more than halve in 2020, and over 50% of those who responded have already had 100% of their work cancelled. They urgently need a safety net to ensure they can pay their bills and support their families until the industry is back on its feet.
9. This industry urgently needs protection and support if the United Kingdom is to remain a global leader in events and culture. The industry, and those who work within in it, are inventive. They find solutions and they are passionate about what they do. Right now, they need help to survive so they can reinvent once this crisis is over.
10. PLASA are uniquely positioned in the event and entertainment industry and represent a wide array of sectors and business types. We have been communicating with the Government (BEIS and DCMS) with zero response. We are constantly in touch with our members to understand how coronavirus is affecting their livelihoods and have been undertaking research to understand the scale of the impact. If you would like to understand more about our industry and the impact, please do not hesitate to get in touch.