

Written evidence submitted by the Safer Disinfectant Network

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Major cultural and sporting events inquiry Written evidence from the Safer Disinfectant Network

Introduction

The Safer Disinfectant Network is pleased to submit written evidence for the Committee's consideration.

The resumption of cultural and sporting events is extremely welcome, and we recognise the importance of these to the population and to the economy. We note the Committee's focus, based on the terms of reference, is on an events programme for 2022 and beyond – and what a comprehensive cultural and sporting programme can deliver in terms of legacy and for the UK. However, we believe it important to reflect upon the lessons of the pandemic to also ensure public confidence in attending events and to reduce potential public health risks – whether these are from Covid-19 or from other viruses and pathogens.

About the Safer Disinfectant Network

The SDN is a collaboration of infection prevention and control experts and manufacturers, with its members including leading academics and experienced professionals who have supported and provided to the NHS throughout the pandemic.

Members of the SDN are committed to promoting best practice and ensuring public safety by encouraging high standards of effectiveness within disinfectant products, based on rigorous testing and independent clinical evidence, and clarity on claims of product efficacy.

Members include Gama Healthcare, Ecolab, Diversey, PDI Healthcare and Ecohydra.

Written evidence

- What does the UK want from major cultural and sporting events, and how effectively is this being reflected in the planning and programming for events in 2022?

We hope that in 2022 the UK can resume being a cultural and sporting hub – the home for events that attract worldwide interest, engagement and investment.

This of course requires the successful resumption of cultural and sporting events this year: ensuring the public are confident to return to such events after the past year, and that sufficient precautions have been taken to reduce any public health risk, whether from Covid-19 or other viruses and pathogens.

The speed and effectiveness of the vaccination programme will give the public significant confidence, but whilst this is continuing there is a need to minimise the risk of asymptomatic

transmission. This means good ventilation in indoor setting and retaining current guidance and requirements for both hand hygiene and for surface cleaning and disinfection remains paramount.

Subsequently, there is a need to retain many of these practices, learning lessons from the past year. Hand hygiene and the cleaning and disinfection of surfaces have been crucial in controlling Covid and will help in managing other respiratory infections.

Existing guidance should be expanded to explain best practice for the cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and commonly touched objects; also to explain what venues (and other components of the events ecosystem, such as hospitality and transport) should look for in the products they are purchasing. The products themselves must be subject to rigorous and independent testing in an accredited laboratory to prove they that they provide the level of protection they claim.

The bi-product of this approach will be to reduce the risk posed by other viruses and pathogens that could cause public health issues.

- What needs to happen for major events to successfully bring people from all four nations of the UK together?
- How should the success of major cultural and sporting events be measured and what should their legacies be?
- What are the challenges facing the delivery of major cultural and sporting events in 2022, and the bid to host the World Cup 2030?

We believe, as outlined above, public confidence is critical to the successful delivery of events in 2022, as is the demonstration that events can be delivered without the risk of increasing numbers of infections of Covid-19, whilst also mitigating any threat posed by other viruses and infections.

An event resulting in an increase in Covid-19 infection numbers, or indeed another virus or pathogen, would be deeply damaging particularly after the challenges of the past year.

This risk can be mitigated by retaining current guidance on ventilation and hand hygiene; and by strengthening existing guidance on surface cleaning and disinfection. Guidance should clearly explain best practice, and make clear that venues, transport providers etc. should be using products that can substantiate their efficacy claims via independent testing in an accredited laboratory.