

Events industry calls for consistency and clarity from government

Events industry leaders have called for clear plans for the return of large scale events here in Scotland as they believe have been set out in England.

With no indication of when gatherings can take place in Scotland and when social distancing rules will be removed the events sector says it is effectively locked down. They say they are frustrated that The Scottish Government has decided to adopt a more cautious approach and that it will not work with the UK Government's plan or framework. The industry claims that pilot events held over recent months have been successful with 5,000 people gathering without masks or social distancing, demonstrating that the risk of transmission has been mitigated with sensible measures.

The Rewind Festival at Scone Palace was cancelled at the end of April due to lack of clarity or guidance although the same festival in England will proceed as planned. The Enchanted Forest event in Perthshire in October has also been shelved. Events are not necessarily financially viable with social distancing in place and event organisers say they stand to lose significant sums.



Geoff Crow

Geoff Crow, Director of 21CC Group and member of the Event Industry Advisory Group said: "We need consistency and

clarity. The event sector in Scotland is at a standstill, which is difficult to watch when we see other sectors opening up and the rest of the UK and parts of the world gearing up for an imminent return. It doesn't seem logical that gatherings and events can go ahead in England from July, but in Scotland we have no dates to be able to do the same.

"From our understanding, there is yet to be a proven case of transmission of Covid-19 as a result of outdoor activity, so we need to know what the current framework is based on in order to be able to understand it.

"As we rise out of Covid as a nation, and particularly with the rollout of the vaccination across the country, we need The Scottish Government to take cognisance of the findings from these pilot events, to balance caution with optimism and create policies that consider health, society and the economy. Sadly, for some, any change now is already too late.

"This trend of cancellation is going to have significant negative social and economic impact across many sectors, including events, hospitality, retail and tourism. We need The Scottish Government to urgently set a date for the removal of social distancing, or offer support in the event of cancellation, because socially, economically, and according to the economists, the event sector is well worth saving."



Peter Duthie

Peter Duthie, Chief Executive at the SEC and Chair of the Event Industry Advisory Group said: "The Event Industry

Advisory Group fully appreciates the challenges faced by The Scottish Government in planning a way out of the pandemic and has consistently taken a proactive and constructive approach to our representations on behalf of the industry.

“Whilst recognising that no certainty can be provided, an understanding of how the government’s data driven approach to the lifting of restrictions will operate is crucial for forward planning and decision making in the sector. Compared to most industries, the events sector requires much longer lead times to resume activity given the extensive planning involved.

“A consistent approach across the four nations is also required to ensure that events in Scotland are not disadvantaged. We hope to see more detail and clarity on this very soon, albeit we recognise that any roadmap would understandably have to feature significant caveats if the situation were to change.”

The event industry has been recognised as a growth sector in the Scottish Government’s economic strategy. In Edinburgh there is first hand knowledge of the events industry with the Festival, the Fringe and the Tattoo all adding to the city’s economy.