



I am writing on behalf of #WeMakeEvents, an organisation representing freelancers and those working in the supply chain to the live events industry. Most of these companies and freelancers work across multiple sectors, including theatre, music, corporate events, festivals and almost any form of organised gatherings.

Government social distancing restrictions mean the live events industry has been unable to operate since March – leaving the sector, once so strong, in a perilous position. Given this, we welcomed the Government's announcement on 13 November that businesses in England are to receive £2.2 billion to see them through national restrictions.

As you will be aware, this scheme is disseminated through local authorities via the Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSRG) and the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). Whilst the LRSRG, disappointingly, is not applicable to most in the live event supply chain, the news of the ARG was extremely welcome as it can be used by local authorities to support live event supply chain businesses and the Government has urged this to happen, specifically saying in guidance:

22. Local Authorities can determine how much funding to provide to businesses from the ARG funding provided, and exactly which businesses to target.

*23. However, we encourage Local Authorities to develop discretionary grant schemes to help those businesses which – while not legally forced to close – are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions put in place to control the spread of Covid-19. This could include – for example – businesses which supply the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors, or **businesses in the events sector.***

Given this explicit guidance, we have been disappointed to hear from many our members that local authorities are not offering them any support through ARG. Therefore, we are writing to all local authority chief executives to urge them to address this issue, if they are not doing so already.

Whilst much of the work of businesses in the live event supply chain takes place away from where they are based, both nationally and international, much of the money generated through that activity comes back to the communities the business is based in. They are run by and employ highly skilled professionals that live in the area, invest in local office and workshop space, and contribute to the wider local economy.

Although not legally forced to close, social distancing restrictions means that almost no live events have been able to take place in the last eight months. As such, many businesses in the live event supply chain are hanging by a thread. If they cannot access the ARG as intended by Government, they may not survive until live events can safely reopen. This will have a lasting impact on the communities they are based in.

If you are not already, we ask you to urgently review your decision-making criteria for ARG to ensure that applications from live event supply chain businesses operating in your community are welcomed and given a fair opportunity to secure funding.