

24<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about support for the performing arts during coronavirus.

I very much regret the impact that coronavirus has had on performing arts in our country, and look forward to when our treasured cultural sector can make a full return.

I strongly welcome the £1.57 billion rescue package that has been announced to help Britain's globally renowned arts, culture and heritage industries weather the impact of coronavirus. Thousands of organisations across a range of sectors including the performing arts and theatres, heritage, historic palaces, museums, galleries, live music and independent cinema will be able to access emergency grants and loans. The money, which represents the biggest ever one-off investment in UK culture, will provide a lifeline to vital cultural and heritage organisations across the country hit hard by the pandemic. Further details about the package can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/157-billion-investment-to-protect-britains-world-class-cultural-arts-and-heritage-institutions).

This package builds on earlier support measures, including a £160 million emergency response package announced by Arts Council England in March. Further details can be found on the Arts Council's website ([www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19)).

The establishment of the Entertainment and Events Working Group was also very welcome. The Working Group informs and supports the work of the Cultural Renewal Taskforce headed by the Culture Secretary, which is working to find innovative ways to reopen the arts sector as soon as possible.

I am particularly pleased that theatres can now reopen for rehearsal, pre-production and broadcast, and audiences adhering to social distancing will be able to return to indoor theatres, music and performance venues from 1 August. This, alongside the work being done with representatives of the entertainment and events industry to develop supporting guidance, represents a vital step in the roadmap to recovery for our nations' theatres.

I know the Secretary of State, Ministers and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) officials continue to consult the creative and cultural sectors extensively to ensure they understand fully the potential impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak on the sector. DCMS officials and ministers have also held regular calls with representatives from across the arts and cultural sector and these have included representatives from the Royal Shakespeare Company and a number of dance schools and representatives including Sadler's Wells and Northern Ballet.

It is very welcome that the Secretary of State for Culture has announced a five stage roadmap for the reopening of theatres and music venues.

The plan includes allowing outdoor performances later this year, with a view to piloting indoor performances afterwards.

**Follow Alok on Twitter: @AlokSharma\_RDG**

**Please reply to: The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA  
e: [alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk) w: [www.aloksharma.co.uk](http://www.aloksharma.co.uk) t: 0118 941 3803**

## **Rt Hon Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West**

The steps are:

- Stage One – Rehearsal and training, with no audiences and adhering to social distancing guidelines
- Stage Two – Performances for broadcast and recording purposes, adhering to social distancing guidelines
- Stage Three – Performances outdoors with an audience plus pilots for indoor performances with a limited distance audience
- Stage Four – Performances allowed indoors and outdoors, but with a limited distanced audience indoors
- Stage Five – Performances allowed indoors and outdoors, with a fuller audience indoors

I very much hope that by following this roadmap we will be able to ensure the performing arts do not stay closed longer than is absolutely necessary to protect public health.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

**Follow Alok on Twitter: @AlokSharma\_RDG**

**Please reply to: The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA  
e: [alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk) w: [www.aloksharma.co.uk](http://www.aloksharma.co.uk) t: 0118 941 3803**