

Audiences back in theatres from 1 August

- Pilots underway ahead of opening up of indoor performance venues ☐

Audiences adhering to social distancing will be able to return to indoor theatres, music and performance venues from 1 August, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced today.

The announcement marks a major step in getting the arts and cultural sectors fully back up and running, and follows the government's announcement of £1.57 billion of funding for the arts, culture and heritage sector earlier this month, the biggest ever one off investment in these industries.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is working with the sector on pilots of performances with socially distanced audiences that will inform final guidance for venues in the run up to August 1. These include the London Symphony Orchestra at St Luke's, London with a variety of further events in the coming weeks.

This announcement marks the move to stage 4 of the government's 5-stage roadmap for the return of professional performing arts. Under the new regime, audiences, performers and venues will be expected to maintain social distancing at all times.

Guidance for the performing arts, published earlier this month, also sets out further measures to support the safe return of audiences, including:

- Reduced venue capacity and limited ticket sales to ensure social distancing can be maintained☐
- Tickets will be purchased online and venues encouraged to use e-tickets to reduce contact and help with track and trace☐
- Venues should have clearly communicated social distancing marking in place in areas where queues form and adopt a limited entry approach☐
- Increased deep cleaning of auditoriums☐
- Performances should be scheduled to allow sufficient time to undertake deep cleaning before the next audience arrives☐
- Performers, conductors, musicians must observe social distancing wherever possible☐

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

The UK's performing arts sector is renowned across the world and I am pleased that we are making real progress in getting its doors reopened to the public with social distancing. From August indoor theatres, music venues and performance spaces will safely welcome audiences back across the country.

This is a welcome step in the path to a return to normal and, coupled with our £1.57 billion rescue package, will help secure the future of this important sector.

Notes to editors:

Read the [full guidance](#) and further details of the [£1.57 billion rescue package](#).

Singing and the playing of brass and wind instruments in groups or in front of an audience is still currently limited to professionals only.

This guidance will be for organisations in England. Organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should adhere to the advice of the devolved administrations at all times.

This guidance will be updated as the evidence develops around singing, wind and brass instruments, and the wider public health context. The five stages of the phased return to professional performing arts is as follows:

- Stage One – Rehearsal and training (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 from July 11. We will now also work with the sector to get small pilots started as soon as possible and will set out further details in due course
- Stage Four – Performances allowed indoors / outdoors (but with a limited distanced audience indoors)□
- Stage Five – Performances allowed indoors / outdoors (with a fuller audience indoors)□