

# BRIT Awards to go ahead with live audience as latest event in Government research programme

The 2021 BRIT Awards ceremony will go ahead with a live audience as the latest addition to the government's Events Research Programme, which looks at how venues can restart large events and welcome crowds back safely this summer.

The BRIT Awards with Mastercard will return to London's The O2 arena on Tuesday 11 May with an audience of 4,000 people and live performances from Dua Lipa, Headie One, Arlo Parks and BRIT Rising Star Award winner Griff, among other acts to be announced.

Audience members will not be socially distanced or required to wear face coverings once seated in the arena, however they will be required to follow existing Government guidance when travelling to the venue and adhere to rules set out by the event organisers.

All attendees must have proof of a negative lateral flow test result to enter the venue. As part of the wider scientific research on the trial events, attendees will also be asked to take a test after the event to gather further evidence on the safety of indoor settings, reduced social distancing and the removal of non-pharmaceutical interventions like face coverings.

They will also have to provide contact details for NHS Test and Trace to ensure everyone can be traced in the event of an audience member receiving a positive test after the event.

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, said:

The BRITs are always a big night in the music calendar, but this year's awards will be particularly special. They will reunite live audiences with the best of British talent for the first time in a year, while providing a vital opportunity to see how we can get large crowds back safely as soon as possible.

Music connected us when we were separated by this pandemic, and now it's going to help bring us back together again.

The research gathered from this year's BRIT Awards will build on the evidence collected at other pilots in the programme, including the World Snooker Championships at the Sheffield Crucible and an outdoor gig at Sefton Park hosted by Festival Republic.

The evidence from these pilots will be used to inform government policy to bring about the phased return of fuller audiences to venues and events across

England.

Geoff Taylor, Chief Executive BPI & BRIT Awards, said:

The BRIT Awards team are excited to confirm our plans to host a live audience at our ceremony on May 11th. There could be no better way to celebrate music's biggest night than with an audience present for the first live performances at The O2 in over a year. Most importantly, this is also a key moment in the return of live music, which we all want to see back at scale as quickly as possible.

We will be working closely with the Government, The O2 and all our partners to finalise details and ensure all safety measures and guidelines are adhered to. More exciting performance announcements will be made in the coming days.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We continue to take steps to getting back to doing the things we love, whether that's meeting friends and loved ones, or attending live sport and music.

These planned pilots mean we can gather the necessary evidence to inform our plans for future events, ensuring mass events can take place safely.

I am enormously grateful for the hard work of scientists and clinicians from across the country, which will mean we can start to enjoy these events again safely.

Danielle Kennedy-Clark, Deputy General Manager of The O2 said:

We're proud that The O2 has been selected to host the largest indoor capacity pilot event with The BRITs. This scientific trial is an important step on the path to recovery for the live entertainment industry, and our operational teams are making the final preparations to be able to welcome people into The O2 again for the first time in more than a year".

The information gathered from events as part of the Events Research Programme will be crucial to understand how all venues – from major sport stadiums and theatres to wedding venues, conference centres and nightclubs – could operate safely this summer. The programme of pilots will explore how different approaches to social distancing, ventilation and testing protocols could ease opening and maximise participation.