

## [Festival Republic joins Government pilot programme with a live gig to trial the safe return of fans](#)

The Sefton Park Pilot, in partnership with Culture Liverpool, will further trial approaches to managing and mitigating transmission risks at outdoor events, building on the evidence collected at today's FA Cup semi-final fixture at Wembley and other events in the programme. The evidence from these pilots will be used to inform and shape government policy to bring about the phased return of fuller audiences to venues and events across England.

Researchers on site will examine the movements and behaviour of the crowd of 5,000 people at Sefton Park, which can host audiences of up to 7,500 at full capacity. The audience will not be socially distanced or required to wear face coverings in the controlled setting of the test event. They will be required to follow existing Government guidance on the use of face coverings when travelling to the venue and adhering to rules set out by the event organisers.

Ticket holders will be required to take a rapid lateral flow test at a local testing centre prior to entry to trial the role these facilities could play in the return of large scale events. All attendees must have proof of a negative test result to ensure the safety of staff and other attendees. Attendees will also be asked to take a test after the event to gather further evidence on the safety of outdoor settings, reduced social distancing and the removal of non-pharmaceutical mitigations 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 a positive test.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We're one step closer to a summer of live events now our science-led programme is underway. Testing different settings and looking at different mitigations is key to getting crowds back safely.

The Sefton Park pilot is an important addition to the programme. After many months without live audiences, Festival Republic are bringing live music back to fans with this very special event and I hope it won't be too much longer until gigs are back for good.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The return of spectators to music gigs and sporting events is a

moment we are all looking forward to.

These pilots will inform our approach to ensuring future big events can take place safely. By trialling a range of measures to reduce transmission, we are able to gather vital evidence to inform our plans for allowing events in the future.

I am hugely grateful to scientists and clinicians working hard across the country so we can start to enjoy these events again safely.

Melvin Benn, Managing Director, Festival Republic, said:

Secretary of State Oliver Dowden and his team at DCMS are showing real commitment to making this a reality by launching the Event Research Programme and including the Sefton Park Pilot. I'm delighted to be able to support the Government's efforts to get the live music industry back up and running. This gig is about our absolute commitment to demonstrate that we can and will open on June 21st.

Claire McColgan MBE, Director of Culture Liverpool, said:

This isn't an easy thing to do and I'd like to thank those promoters who have agreed to be part of this massively important research project.

We should all be proud of the fact we're part of this brave endeavour which looks to get this vital sector back up and running and resilient once again.

For many cities, towns and villages events are a major part of the economy, and once we develop resilience through learning, we can look forward to jobs being supported and once again enjoying those much longed for experiences.

The first event as part of the scientific trial began yesterday, with the World Snooker Championships. The Championships are due to run until 3 May, welcoming up to 1,000 spectators a day to the Sheffield Crucible Theatre to test an indoor seated setting.

The information gathered from events as part of the Research Programme will

be crucial to 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.