

Performing Arts given green light to resume outdoors on July 11

- Small pilots of performances indoors with socially distanced audience to take place to inform future plans
- New government guidance outlines how nation's beloved theatres and performance venues can get back up and running safely
- New planning rules to protect theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues

Performing arts can now take place outdoors from 11 July with a socially distanced audience present, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden announced today.

This means that outdoor theatres, opera, dance and music can resume from Saturday so long as they take place outside and with a limited and socially distanced audience. This gives the green light for the likes of outdoor opera at Glyndebourne, Sussex and plays at Cornwall's Minack Theatre, to go ahead. London's West End will also return through the Six, The Musical Drive-In.

The Government will also work with the sector to pilot a number of small indoor performances with a social distanced audience to help inform plans about how best to get indoor venues back up and running.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is working alongside sector bodies including UK Theatre, the Association of British Orchestras and the Musicians' Union to identify suitable pilots. This will include working with London Symphony Orchestra at St Luke's as well as the London Palladium and Butlins amongst others.

A change in planning rules will also mean theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues will be protected from demolition or change of use by developers, stopping those that have been made temporarily vacant during lockdown disappearing altogether and giving extra security to these businesses as they start to re-open.

Today's announcements follows the government's announcement of £1.57 billion of funding for the arts, culture and heritage sector earlier this week, the biggest ever one off investment in these industries.

[New guidance](#), published by the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport today, will help performing arts organisations, venue operators and participants in the UK understand how they can work and take part in the performing arts safely, and keep their audiences safe.

The guidance follows the government's five-stage roadmap outlining how we

will get audiences back into performing arts venues. It provides advice on all aspects of performance, from casting, sound and lighting, costume and fitting, to cloakrooms, orchestra pits, hair and make-up.

Singing and the playing of brass and wind instruments will be permitted in a managed and controlled professional working environment to minimise risk.

The Secretary of State has also commissioned a scientific study on the risks associated with singing and brass instruments which will be done in partnership with Public Health England, professional musicians from the Royal Opera House and the BBC and scientists from Imperial College, London and Bristol University. This will help inform our work on getting the performing arts fully back up and running safely, by testing what can be done safely.

The guidance makes clear that the following measures should be considered to allow for safe resumption of performances:

- A reduction in venue capacity and limited ticket sales to ensure social distancing can be maintained
- All tickets must be purchased online and venues are encouraged to move towards e-ticketing for 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
- Singing and the playing of brass and wind instruments in groups or in front of an audience is limited to professionals only
- Performers, conductors, musicians must observe social distancing wherever possible

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Our culture, heritage and arts are too precious to lose. That's why we're protecting venues like theatres from redevelopment if they fall on hard times.

We are also giving further clarity on restart dates in our roadmap back to performance. From July 11 we can all enjoy performances outdoors with social distancing and we are working hard to get indoor audiences back as soon as we safely can, following pilots. Our scientific research project will also help speed up this journey.

Combined with our £1.57bn rescue package, this is a comprehensive plan to help our brilliant arts organisations weather the covid storm and bounce back stronger.

Housing and Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick said:

The UK has a leading cultural industry that is the envy of the world. Our theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues are one of the reasons that the country has this reputation and they are essential to our national culture. That's why we are protecting them for the enjoyment of future generations.

Alongside the £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage institutions, I am ensuring the buildings that represent these institutions can't be destroyed and are properly protected in the planning system.

All venues will be instructed to produce risk assessments and review their cleaning regimes, however deep cleaning and social distancing systems, including floor markings are all required to be completed in a way that does not damage the historic fabric of any listed buildings.

The guidance is part of the government's clear, phased approach to recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, as outlined in the Prime Minister's roadmap.

Notes to editors:

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)