

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Ymchwiliad i'r achosion o COVID-19 ac effaith y feirws ar ddiwylliant, y diwydiannau creadigol, treftadaeth, cyfathrebu a chwaraeon / Inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on culture, creative industries, heritage, communications and sport

CWLC COV77

Ymateb gan Live Comedy Association / Response from Live Comedy Association

To:

Oliver Dowden MP

Caroline Dinenage MP

Eluned Morgan MS

Dafydd Elis-Thomas MS

Fiona Hyslop MSP

Deirdre Hargey MLA

Darren Henley, Arts Council England

Nick Capaldi, Arts Council of Wales

Gerwyn Evans, Creative Wales

Iain Munro, Creative Scotland

Roisin McDonough, Arts Council of Northern Ireland



17 July 2020

Dear all,

Comedy has a long history of being overlooked as an artform, having never received any public funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Music, and Sport. Live comedy isn't viewed as being equal to other art forms by funding bodies across the UK — the same funding bodies responsible for distributing this week's £1.57 billion support package.

This is despite comedy being a grassroots creative industry, which is accessible and inclusive to all, no matter your income, where you live, or your sense of humour. Ticket prices are cheaper than almost any other artform, and comedy takes place in every nation and region of the country, in dedicated spaces but also in pubs, music venues, and theatres in every town and city.

We believe that comedy is art and should be treated as such. As fans, audience members, and those who work in live comedy, we therefore ask:

1. That Comedy is treated on a par with the rest of the performing arts sector by government and funding bodies, including being given the same access to the Cultural Rescue Package.
2. For support to prevent job losses and a talent exodus from comedy, including an extension of the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme for the Performing Arts sector, and specific recognition and support of the self employed, freelancers and sole traders who are over 70% of our industry.
3. For a clear timeline for reopening venues without social distancing. We recognise that

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this will be conditional on scientific advice and review from public health bodies, but the industry needs a precisely dated roadmap to work towards.

If the UK Governments do not act immediately and comprehensively to support the Live Comedy Industry, the sector will risk disappearing as an artform and cultural industry and the thousands of talented people, organisations and venues which make up the industry we love will face financial ruin.

Signed,

Live Comedy Association

Following pages containing names of signatories represented by the Live Comedy Association have been redacted