

# Joint statement by the UK and Viet Nam

## News story

Joint Ministerial statement from the United Kingdom (UK) and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (Viet Nam) on the conclusion of the UK-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement



The UK and Viet Nam are pleased to announce the conclusion of the UK-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (FTA). 1. UK and Viet Nam enjoy excellent diplomatic relations and increasingly common goals. This is demonstrated by the renewing of our UK-Viet Nam Strategic Partnership for a further ten years in September this year. The Partnership provides a framework for a strong bilateral relationship and outlines key priorities, including low-carbon development, multilateralism, the promotion of human rights, and trade. Under Viet Nam's effective role as chair of ASEAN in 2020, the UK has taken the significant step of requesting to become a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN.

1. The UK and Viet Nam share a strategic commitment to global trade, and the free flow of capital and investments. The bilateral Free Trade Agreement provides vital continuity for our fast-growing and dynamic trading relationship. In 2019, UK businesses exported goods to Viet Nam worth over £600 million. In the same year, Vietnamese businesses exported goods to the UK worth around £4.6 billion.
2. The bilateral FTA locks in benefits of our existing trading relationship through the EU-Viet Nam Agreement. Trade in goods ranging from clothing and footwear to seafood and pharmaceutical products can continue uninterrupted. Trade in services, in particular financial services and e-commerce, can continue to flourish.
3. Companies can continue to benefit from reduced tariffs on imports and exports, from increased access to services and from the protection of key British and Vietnamese products. This includes 65% of all tariffs that have already been eliminated on UK-Vietnam trade. This will increase to 99% of tariffs by the time of full implementation. Vietnam

stands to benefit from tariff savings of £114 million on Vietnamese exports. For UK exports, this figure will be £36 million.

4. This bilateral agreement therefore represents the beginning of a new phase in the relationship between our two countries in developing key areas of trade. Not only does the FTA liberalise goods and services trade, it incorporates many other important elements, such as working towards clean growth and sustainable development.
5. This agreement is also a key step towards the UK joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). As a founding member of the group, Vietnam has welcomed the UK's interest in joining the CPTPP agreement and publicly shown their support for the UK's accession to the CPTPP in the future. Accession to the CPTPP is a priority for the UK Government, which plans to apply for this in early 2021. CPTPP is one of the most important free trade agreements in the world, accounting for 13% of global GDP in 2019. This would rise to 16% of global GDP if the UK were to join. The UK and Vietnam look forward to working closely on this.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, UNITED KINGDOM, RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS  
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## People with long-term health conditions urged to get flu vaccine before Christmas

Health chiefs, and a coalition of charities, are urging people with long-term health conditions to get the [flu vaccine](#) before the virus starts to circulate. Public Health England (PHE) analysis shows 6 in 10 deaths from flu are seen in people with underlying conditions.

A coalition of charities, including the British Heart Foundation and Mencap, are joining PHE and the NHS in urging them to get vaccinated before Christmas.

Flu is a highly infectious disease and can lead to serious complications for those living with a long-term health condition, including:

- respiratory and heart conditions
- diabetes
- kidney disease
- liver disease
- chronic neurological disease like multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy

People with chronic respiratory diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or asthma, are 7 times more likely to die if they catch flu compared to healthy adults. People with cardiovascular problems, such as chronic heart disease or angina, or who have had a stroke, are 11 times more likely.

Some people with certain long-term health conditions may not view themselves as being at increased risk of serious illness from flu, especially if their condition is not related to the respiratory system. However, people with chronic liver disease and immunosuppression are 48 and 47 times more likely, respectively, to die from flu compared to healthy adults.

So far this year, 46.8% of people with a long-term health condition (under the age of 65 years) have had the flu vaccine. While vaccine coverage in this group is higher than it has been at this point compared to the last 6 flu seasons, it still lags behind coverage in other eligible groups. This year, we have already achieved the highest ever recorded flu vaccine uptake among older people.

Uptake also varies greatly between the different at risk groups. Last year, it was highest in people with diabetes at 61.2% and lowest in people with a BMI over 40 at 30.9%.

Over the last 5 years, flu has killed an average of 11,000 people in England each year, but the figure has ranged from around 4,000 deaths in the 2018 to 2019 season to more than 22,000 deaths in 2017 to 2018.

This year, with those most vulnerable to flu also being at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), it is more important than ever that eligible people get the flu vaccine.

Dr Vanessa Saliba, Head of Flu at Public Health England said:

The flu vaccine is the best defence against what can be a serious illness, especially for those living with long-term health conditions, such as respiratory diseases, diabetes and liver disease.

People living with long-term health conditions are also at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and having both flu and COVID-19 at the same time is associated with a greater risk of more severe illness and death. Therefore, it is more important than ever to get vaccinated against flu.

People aged 6 months to 65 years with one or more long-term health

conditions, pregnant women and those aged 65 years and over are at a greater clinical risk from flu. All these groups are eligible for a free vaccine, which is the best defence against flu. From 1 December, 50 to 64 year olds also became eligible for the first time.

Public Health Minister, Jo Churchill, said:

The flu vaccine is there to protect as many people as possible, especially those living with long-term health conditions who carry a higher risk of falling seriously ill.

This winter with COVID-19 circulating, it's more important than ever that all those eligible get their jab. Our brilliant GPs and pharmacists are delivering the vaccine to record numbers and if you are contacted by your GP, make sure you take the opportunity to get your free flu vaccination.

Dr Nikki Kanani, Medical Director of Primary Care in England, said:

As well as kicking off the world-first COVID-19 programme this week, the NHS continues to offer essential flu vaccines for those who need it, and it's especially important that those most at-risk, including with long-term conditions, get vaccinated.

We have written to eligible patients inviting them to get vaccinated without delay, and NHS services have put a range of measures in place to minimise any risk of COVID-19.

Dr Michael Brady, Medical Director at Terrence Higgins Trust, said:

We strongly encourage people living with HIV to visit their GP or local pharmacy for a quick, painless flu jab this winter. Research shows that HIV is associated with an increased severity of flu and greater risk of complications relating to that. Being on effective HIV treatment reduces the possibility of hospitalisation because of flu, but it's still better to get the protection of the flu jab, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when infection with both viruses could cause additional problems.

Vanessa Hebditch, Director of Policy and Communications at the British Liver Trust, said:

The liver is a vital weapon in our body's armoury for fighting infection. If the liver is damaged, our bodies find it much harder to fight off illnesses of all kinds, including the flu. Liver disease has many different causes, but any kind of long-term damage to this organ, no matter what the cause, can leave people more

prone to infection.

Many people with chronic liver disease don't realise that they are at much higher risk of serious illness or even death if they were to catch the flu. The shocking statistics speak for themselves. That's why it's so important people with long-term liver disease take steps to protect themselves by getting their winter vaccinations.

Dr Keith Brownlee, Director of Policy, Programmes and Support at the Cystic Fibrosis Trust said:

We urge everyone with cystic fibrosis and their families to protect themselves by getting the flu jab. Everyone with cystic fibrosis is at higher risk of being seriously unwell from the flu, and flu can also cause long term damage. However every year lots of people miss out on getting their jab which is an important layer of protection against becoming ill so don't delay, get the jab.

Karen Davies, Senior Clinical Advisor at Diabetes UK, said:

Flu can be incredibly serious, and people with diabetes are particular vulnerable to serious complications if they get it. Getting flu can make your diabetes harder to manage and can cause your blood sugar levels to rise dangerously high. With the coronavirus pandemic still posing a very real threat, it's incredibly important that people with diabetes stay well and stay out of hospital. That's why this year, more than ever, it is so important that people with diabetes take up the offer of a free flu jab.

We know all flu jab providers will be facing increased demand this year. But we want to reassure people that there are a number of options available to them to get their jab, that include their GP surgery or their local pharmacy. The jab can take up to 2 weeks to be effective, so we're urging everyone with diabetes to get booked, and get vaccinated, as soon as possible.

If anyone needs advice on how or where to get a flu jab, our helpline is available on 0345 123 2399, Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm, or you can find more information on diabetes and flu at [diabetes.org.uk](https://diabetes.org.uk).

Ismail Kaji, Parliamentary Support Officer at the learning disability charity Mencap, who has a learning disability, said:

It's very important people with a learning disability get the flu

vaccine to stop them getting ill, especially as many people with a learning disability also have health conditions which means they could become very unwell. And while you should get it every year, it's more important than ever this winter because of coronavirus – and it's also free for people with a learning disability and their main carer. You can keep you and those around you safe.

If you're feeling nervous, remember you can ask for reasonable adjustments to get the support you need. You can ask for more time in the appointment and for the nurse to explain everything clearly to you, and show you the equipment they will use to help you feel more comfortable.

People with a learning disability can have more health problems than other people and can find it harder to get the healthcare they need, so it's a good idea to get as much protection as possible. The flu jab can help with this so make sure you get it done this winter.

Barbara Kobson, Senior Cardiac Nurse at the British Heart Foundation, said:

With the COVID-19 pandemic still looming, getting your flu jab is as vital as ever, especially if you have a heart and circulatory condition or are older. It only takes 5 minutes and reduces your chances of catching flu, which can exacerbate conditions such as coronary heart disease and heart failure. Getting the jab will mean you're also supporting the NHS as it may stop you becoming ill and needing treatment at a time when hospitals are under immense pressure from a potential winter rise in COVID-19 cases.

Jessica Kirby, Head of Health Advice at Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation, said:

One in five people in the UK has a long-term lung condition, including asthma and COPD, making them more likely to develop the most severe symptoms of the flu, which is more likely to be fatal for people with health conditions.

We'd urge everyone who is eligible for a free flu vaccine to get one as soon as possible and ideally before the Christmas break, when people are likely to mix in larger groups making it possible for the virus to spread more rapidly. For those who have been unable to get a vaccine due to shortages in their area, do keep trying as new stocks are becoming available. If you are unsure if you are eligible, our advice is to speak to your GP who can assess your individual risk.

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# Virgin and O2 merger referred for in-depth investigation

Press release

The CMA has referred the proposed merger of Virgin Media and Virgin Mobile with O2 for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation.



The move comes after Virgin and O2 requested that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) move quickly to the in-depth Phase 2 stage of its review through a 'fast-track' process.

Merging companies can ask for a case to be fast tracked to Phase 2 where there is sufficient evidence at an early stage of the investigation for the CMA to conclude that there is a realistic prospect that the transaction would result in a substantial lessening of competition in one or more markets. The option to fast track provides flexibility in the CMA process and enables such cases to progress efficiently and quickly.

The CMA has today accepted this request given the deal's potential impact on competition in several telecommunication markets in the UK, and the Phase 2 probe will begin immediately.

Both Virgin and O2 provide certain wholesale services to other mobile network operators in the UK – wholesale mobile services and mobile backhaul, respectively. The CMA is concerned that, following the merger, Virgin and O2 may have an incentive to raise prices or reduce the quality of these wholesale services, ultimately leading to a worse deal for UK consumers.

The Phase 2 investigation will be overseen by an inquiry group chosen from the CMA's independent panel members. Over the course of the investigation, the group will gather evidence from a range of sources to inform its in depth analysis.

In the coming weeks, the group will publish an issues statement setting out

in detail the aspects it expects to investigate. Interested parties will then have the opportunity to present their views on the merger and the issues to be examined by the group.

The CMA's full referral decision and expected timelines for its Phase 2 investigation will be published shortly on the [Liberty Global plc / Telefónica S.A. merger inquiry case page](#).

## Notes to editors

1. Liberty Global plc (Liberty) owns Virgin Media and Virgin Mobile in the UK, and Telefónica S.A. (Telefónica) owns O2 in the UK.
2. Following a request from the CMA, the European Commission referred the proposed merger of Virgin Media and Virgin Mobile with O2 to the CMA for investigation on 19 November 2020.
3. Under the Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act) the CMA has a duty to make a reference to Phase 2 if the CMA believes that it is or may be the case that a relevant merger situation has been created, or arrangements are in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and the creation of that situation has resulted, or may be expected to result, in a substantial lessening of competition within any market or markets in the United Kingdom for goods or services.
4. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk) or 020 3738 6460.

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## [A year of climate action: op-ed by Charles Hay](#)

As the world continues to deal with the Coronavirus, we must not neglect global warming, which is becoming a greater threat by the day. If COVID-19 is the storm that we will ride out soon, climate change is the catastrophe that will affect us for decades ahead.

In Asia, 2020 has seen some of the worst monsoon flooding in decades, affecting countries from China to Vietnam. In 2018, Bank Negara reported that the growing intensity and frequency of climate-related events are increasingly a risk to the Malaysian economy.

According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Malaysia has, in the two decades up to 2018, experienced more than 50 natural disasters, affecting more than 3 million people. The increasing severity and frequency of major floods and dry spells have severely affected livelihoods –



particularly in the agriculture sector. Climate disasters have cost the Malaysian economy around RM8 billion.

As countries manage the impact of the global pandemic, they have an opportunity to use the economic stimulus to invest in building back greener economies, and reduce the emissions that cause damaging climate change.

In November 2021, the UK will host the United Nations Conference of Parties (CoP26) climate summit in partnership with Italy. This will be a pivotal moment for the world to come together and agree on ambitious steps to address global warming.

Governments are starting to rally behind the goal of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions. China has set the ambitious goal of being “net zero” by 2060, and Japan and South Korea by 2050. 126 countries, together responsible for over half of global emissions, now have similar targets.

And it is not only at the national level we are seeing action. Here in Malaysia, TNB, the country’s biggest utility, has announced that it has built its last coal-fired power plant. Kuala Lumpur City and Petronas have pledged net zero aspirations by 2050.

These commitments will cut emissions and help Malaysia deliver its contribution a low carbon transition. But there is more to be done. Tackling and adapting to climate change cannot wait.

On December 12, the UK will co-host a Climate Ambition Summit to mark the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement. Every country that is part of the Paris Agreement is invited to the virtual event, which will focus on action to reduce emissions and build resilience to climate impacts. We expect some really significant commitments at that summit, which will provide further impetus for even more countries to cut emission targets even further.

I was therefore delighted that the Malaysian Budget announced on 6 November includes plans for investment in the sustainability of key sectors to encourage a green recovery in Malaysia. This includes Malaysia’s first Sustainability Bond for environmental and social initiatives in 2021 and other sustainable financing schemes.

The UK has demonstrated it is possible to decouple emissions from economic growth. Since 1990, we have grown our economy by over two thirds, while reducing emissions by 42%. On 4th December, we announced that we will reduce our emissions further by 68% and this commitment will now be deposited into the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process as UK’s official Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) offer.

The economic case for transition is now even more compelling, with solar – a Renewable Energy source with great potential in Malaysia – now the cheapest form of power globally. So it’s great to be working with Malaysia to realise these opportunities here.

The challenge in the coming year will be to bring together all these efforts so that globally we can secure even higher ambitions at CoP26. It is vital

that we now work together as a planet for a sustainable future for our children and their children.

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## More than £165 million in repayable finance announced to support major arts and heritage institutions as Culture Fund marks £1 billion milestone

- The Government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund surpasses £1 billion milestone, supporting more than 75,000 jobs, with remaining £400 million on the way as plans for a further round of support announced
- £60 million in capital funding has been awarded for ongoing construction and maintenance with 75% awarded to organisations outside of London

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More than £165 million in repayable finance has been offered to support some of the country's most iconic cultural organisations, including the National Theatre, Southbank Centre, the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Shakespeare Company, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden has announced today.

### **New £400 million Culture Recovery Fund round**

Plans for allocating the remainder of the £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund are also being announced today which will help organisations look to the future. Funding, which was held back in previous rounds to allow the Government to respond to the changing public health picture, will be available for organisations who are at imminent risk of collapse before the end of this Financial Year. £300 million in grants and £100 million in loans will also be available to support organisations' transition back to usual operating mode from April 2021. Further detail on the rounds will be released in due course.

## **£165 million repayable finance offers**

The £165 million loans have been offered to 11 nationally and internationally significant organisations that demonstrated opportunities to engage local communities through education and outreach programmes.

The organisations receiving loans provide work for more than 9,000 people, taking the total number of jobs supported by the CRF to more than 75,000, with many more freelancers and jobs in vital supply chain industries also benefitting, as part of the government's Plan for Jobs to support, protect and create jobs across the UK.

Bespoke loans have been tailored for cultural institutions with an initial repayment holiday of up to four years, low interest rate and up to 20-year repayment term to ensure they are affordable for arts and heritage organisations.

The funding will help world-renowned organisations like the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) which has been producing fresh interpretations of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and championing the work of new playwrights for a global audiences for more than sixty years, as well as working with young people across the country through its education programmes.

The RSC's loan of £19,400,000 will enable the company to look to reopen full-scale productions in Stratford-upon-Avon and London in Spring 2021. It will also enable the RSC to continue its national education and partnership activity and ensure the company can revisit previous touring plans.

The security of the repayable finance will also help protect organisations – like the National Theatre – as they restart performances and programmes, providing work for staff and freelancers in the run-up to Christmas.

The National Theatre will benefit from £19,700,000 of support as it reopens, helping the venue return to a more financially sustainable footing. The National Theatre, which led digital innovation during lockdown to make some of their most famous productions available for free, is reopening with a pantomime for socially distanced audiences as well as filming a new version of Romeo and Juliet for TV starring Jessie Buckley and Josh O'Connor. Earlier this week, the Culture Secretary visited to see its final preparations for Dick Whittington which begins performances today and will be available for families to stream online for free over Christmas.

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, said:

This government promised it would be here for culture and today's announcement is proof we've kept our word.

The £1 billion invested so far through the Culture Recovery Fund has protected tens of thousands of jobs at cultural organisations across the UK, with more support still to come through a second round of applications.

Today we're extending a huge helping hand to the crown jewels of UK culture – so that they can continue to inspire future generations all around the world.

Olivia Colman, who starred in Lucy Kirkwood's *Mosquitoes* at the National Theatre, said:

Theatre is at the heart of Britain's creativity and the National Theatre is a crucial part of that, whether working with young people across the country or making shows to thrill global audiences. Alongside the grants to smaller theatres, it's wonderful to hear that the NT's future is being supported by this lifeline loan.

Lisa Burger, Executive Director and Joint Chief Executive, National Theatre, said:

The National Theatre is incredibly grateful and relieved to secure this emergency loan from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund. It is a vital lifeline that will form part of our recovery, helping to ensure that the National Theatre will be here for culture and here for the nation, now and in the future. While the challenges of this pandemic are not over, we can now begin to rebuild the NT with a renewed commitment to make theatre for everyone that celebrates the diversity of our nation. Together with support we hope to secure from our partners, donors and audiences, the loan will enable us to invest in the freelance creative workforce to produce some of the world's most exciting theatre. We stand ready to play our part in supporting the UK's economic and emotional recovery from the effects of COVID-19.

## **Capital Funding to venues across England**

As part of the Culture Recovery Fund, £60 million in grants is being delivered through the Capital Kickstart Fund. This will accelerate previously-funded projects that will revitalise core assets in local communities and provide opportunities for work across a range of sectors.

Further investment for capital projects impacted by the pandemic has also been awarded to 74 arts organisations of all sizes, continuing the government's investment in cultural infrastructure across the country. To date, more than £107 million in capital grant funding has been awarded to 260 projects across arts and heritage sectors, with more than three quarters based outside of London, stimulating the wider supply chain across the country and providing opportunities for skilled construction workers and conservation experts to work on specialist heritage renovations and cutting-edge cultural projects.

Recipients include the Turner Contemporary in Margate which has been awarded £264,000 to complete a long-term transformation of its visitor facilities and digital infrastructure as well as improving the environmental sustainability of the site. The gallery has been a catalyst for the social and economic regeneration of the area and the funding will help the gallery look to reopen in early 2021 to minimise the impact of continued closure on the local community.

The Factory will receive £21,000,000 in capital investment towards the completion of the project to create a world-class cultural space in the heart of Manchester. As well as providing a multi-use space for diverse arts activity, the state-of-the-art venue will be the permanent home for the ambitious year-round creative programme of Manchester International Festival which attracts visitors to the city from across the country and creates opportunities for creative freelancers.

Nottingham's Broadway will receive £144,000 to refurbish vital visitor spaces whilst reducing the centre's energy usage to create a more environmentally sustainable future to the regional film hub. The project was due to be completed by September 2020, and this funding will ensure the plans can be completed quickly and safely to reopen and welcome back audiences.

Alexandra Palace has also been announced as the latest recipient of grant funding through the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage, distributed on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England. £2,967,600 will allow one of the capital's leading multi-use cultural venues to continue with a diverse programme of live, covid-secure events this winter by covering increased essential costs and supplementing income.

The financing announced today takes the total allocated from the Culture Recovery Fund over £1 billion, delivering on the government's commitment to be here for culture in every corner of the country during this pandemic.

Devolved Administrations received £188 million through the Barnett Formula to ensure the Culture Recovery Fund has a fundamental and far-reaching impact across all four nations. Northern Ireland has allocated £29 million to a Covid-19 Culture, Languages, Arts and Heritage Support Programme, and over £5 million to a Heritage Recovery Fund. Wales has established a £63.7 million Cultural Recovery Fund which includes £20 million to support music, dance, theatre, literature, and the arts allocated by Arts Council Wales. Scotland's £59 million funding package has also supported the arts, heritage, and grassroots music and established a £15 million Culture Organisations and Venues Recovery Fund.

In England, more than £500 million in grants up to £3 million have been awarded to over 3,000 museums, music venues, independent cinemas, circuses, heritage sites and theatres across the country. Nearly 70% of funding has been awarded to recipients outside of London.

Nearly £100 million in additional Grant in Aid has been allocated to national museums, and other Arm's Length Bodies including the British Library, British

Film Institute, Churches Conservation Trust and English Heritage.

## Notes to Editors

On Monday 7 December, the Culture Recovery Board approved terms for loan agreements which are expected to be signed shortly following a period of final negotiations. The full list of the organisations receiving repayable finance from the Culture Recovery Fund is as follows:

- English National Opera
- Historic Royal Palaces
- London Theatre Company
- Mark Goucher Ltd.
- Michael Harrison Entertainment
- National Theatre
- Production Park
- Royal Albert Hall
- Royal Opera House
- Royal Shakespeare Company
- Southbank Centre

View the [full list of the recipients](#) from the Capital Kickstart Fund.

Decisions on loan applications were taken by the independent Culture Recovery Board, chaired by Sir Damon Buffini. The diverse board applied a wide range of financial and cultural expertise to the fair and rigorous decision-making process.

## Additional quotes

John Barnes, Chief Executive, Historic Royal Palaces, said:

After a difficult year, news of this loan comes as a great relief for Historic Royal Palaces. As a self-funding charity dependent on visitor income, our finances have been decimated by the pandemic. The scale of the losses we have faced has been so significant that, at times, the future of our charity has been uncertain.

This loan is the lifeline we need to begin our recovery. It will help us to cover our losses this year, after using all our reserves, and the further losses we expect to face in 2021, until we are able to support ourselves again. We are grateful to the DCMS and Arts Council England for providing us with this vital assistance and confident in our ability to repay the loan from the income that we will generate in better times.

After a year focused on survival, we can now look to the future with optimism. For us, that means loving and looking after six of the most wonderful palaces in the world, and creating space for spirits to stir and be stirred. We are ready to play our part in rebuilding the UK tourism industry.

Alex Beard, Chief Executive, Royal Opera House, said:

We are hugely grateful for the significant and vital support from Arts Council England and DCMS through the Culture Recovery Fund. This repayable finance will help address some of the immediate financial damage caused by this crisis, easing our route to re-opening and paving the way for the world's greatest artists to once more return to our stages.

As we look to the future, we will continue to make outstanding and imaginative work which connects with audiences around the world, and will continue to embed audience and artist diversity, nationwide learning and participation and environmental sustainability at the heart of everything we do.

Continuing global uncertainty, the inevitable long-term economic impact of this enduring crisis, and the challenges of socially-distanced performances mean that the road ahead is not smooth for our industry, so this essential financial support forms just one part of our four-part recovery plan. Alongside this package of government support is a programme of restructuring and redundancy, realising such value as we can from our assets and an extensive fundraising campaign which will allow us to reach our goal of reopening in full, as per the Government's five stage plan for recovery.

Elaine Bedell, Chief Executive, Southbank Centre, said:

We're incredibly grateful to the Culture Recovery Board for this vote of confidence in the Southbank Centre and our business recovery plan. We lost £25 million of our income this year and this loan will help us stabilise our finances as we prepare to reopen all our venues safely next Spring. We still have challenges – but we can meet them now with creative optimism and look forward to rebuilding our ambitious artistic programme. We're acutely aware that this loan is taxpayers money and we must be sure that we deliver value back to all the communities we serve, in London and across the UK. We can't wait to throw open our doors once more and welcome back our much-missed audiences and visitors.

Edward Gardner, Principal Conductor, London Philharmonic Orchestra:

The Southbank Centre is an essential part of London's artistic lifeblood. This support will help our mission to bring the most adventurous music making to the most people.

Bridget Riley said:

The Southbank Centre grew out of the Festival of Britain immediately after World War II. It has celebrated art across the disciplines and provides a much loved and highly valued centre south of the River Thames for work that may not be seen, performed, or heard elsewhere. It was splendid to hear that the South Bank Centre is in line to receive a government loan to help it to continue its vital programme and to inspire audiences in London, across the UK and internationally.

Antony Gormley said:

The Southbank Centre is a place of collective gathering at the core of our cultural life : a celebratory platform for the visual and performative arts bringing solace, inspiration and joy . I love it.

Lee Brooks, Chief Executive, Production Park, said:

The Production Park team is delighted to receive support through the Government's Cultural Recovery Fund in what has been a very turbulent year for the live events sector across the UK. Whilst the fund will support a good deal of the sector's businesses keep afloat in the short term, we're using the fund to invest strategically in a long-term development programme at the park.

The sector has suffered a real blow this year, but it's also allowed us to be fleet of foot and address diversification and growth areas. We're treating the package as an economic stimulus, looking to the future of the live events sector, so that we can create jobs, opportunities, and revenues for years to come when the sector bounces back after Covid.

Nicholas Hynter, co-founder of London Theatre Company and The Bridge Theatre, said:

The grants made already this autumn by the Culture Recovery Fund have been an essential intervention in the crisis that has befallen the performing arts. The announcement of the CRF Repayable Finance Scheme is a further vital infusion of cash into a sector struck hardest by Covid, and we are very grateful to be included amongst these loans.

We're determined to do all we can to generate employment for the freelance community and joy for audiences. People are going to need ever more the stimulation of live performance and we're determined to make our contribution as energetically as we can.



Stuart Murphy, CEO, English National Opera, said:

Everyone at ENO is enormously grateful to Oliver Dowden, Sarah Healey and everyone at DCMS, and Adam Jeanes and the team at Arts Council England for their support during this pandemic. Today's news allows us to continue ENO's long history of innovation and plan for the future. We can't wait to use this financial support to continue creating brilliant opera available to everyone.

Nick Serota, Arts Council England, said:

Today's announcements are another vital step in securing the future of England's cultural sector. The support for capital projects will help to ensure that we maintain an innovative, sustainable cultural infrastructure that supports world class creative work. The Repayable Loans will enable some of our most significant and internationally recognised cultural organisations to weather the effects of Covid-19 and reopen when it is safe to do so. The Arts Council is grateful to the Government for their exceptional support through the Culture Recovery Fund.

Noma Dumezweni, RSC Associate Artist

This news means the RSC can secure the future of its invaluable partnership work in schools and communities all over the country, ensuring the next generation have access to Shakespeare and the performing arts, and that it can redouble its efforts to nurture and celebrate the skills and talents of our diverse nation.

I am delighted that the Culture Recovery Fund has been able to make a difference to so many arts organisations; this is an important step on the long road to recovery for our world-beating workforce and in helping reinforce to those starting out, that places like RSC are part of a vital lineage in the arts

Other organisations which have been offered repayable finance include:

Royal Opera House – A loan of £21,700,000 will stabilise the Royal Opera House, home of The Royal Opera, The Royal Ballet, and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Royal Opera House normally attracts 650,000 people to performances every year and hosts cinema and outdoor screenings across the UK and in 42 countries around the world. A reworked version of the Christmas classic, The Nutcracker, opens today performed by the Royal Ballet to socially distanced audiences and the Royal Opera will host a Christmas Concert of festive favourites.

Southbank Centre – £10,911,000 in repayable finance will stabilise the finances, replenish the depleted reserves of the UK's largest arts centre and allow it to open all of its venues with an ambitious artistic programme.

The Southbank Centre works with over 100,000 artists and creatives a year from across the UK and provides a wide ranging programme of over 3,000 performances, exhibitions and events including classical music, visual art, literature, gigs, comedy and festivals. Over 40 per cent of the Southbank Centre's annual programme is free of charge for the public to access.

Production Park – Financing of £12,000,000 will deliver Production Park's plans to create a Research and Development and business incubation facility on site in Wakefield to support local businesses in the live events and creative industries. The investment will also help Production Park to expand their existing studio facilities and create a managed workspace to nurture up and coming talent in the region.

Production Park is a Yorkshire-based community of studios, businesses and educational facilities working together to create live events technology, produce live experiences and share live industry best practice. As well as providing rehearsal space for some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry, including Coldplay, Little Mix and Peter Kay, Production Park is home to more than 20 live events businesses and higher education provider, the Backstage Academy, which offers degrees and short courses for the creative industries.

Royal Albert Hall – £20,740,000 will support one of the country's busiest music venues until it can return to pre-covid levels of programming. The Royal Albert Hall, which welcomed more than 1.7 million people to 391 events in the auditorium and over 1,000 in other spaces in 2019, has reopened with a winter programme of performances to socially distanced audiences.

Since opening in 1871, the Royal Albert Hall has hosted some of the world's leading figures in music, dance, sport, fashion and film as a performance venue and the home of the BAFTAs, Oliviers and British Fashion Awards. The Royal Albert Hall also runs extensive education and outreach programmes to engage people of all ages and local communities with music.

English National Opera – A loan of £8,500,000 will enable the English National Opera to produce performances to live, socially-distanced audiences and broadcast work to audiences across the country, as it did in lockdown with Mozart's Requiem on BBC2. It will also allow ENO to expand social prescribing projects such as ENO Breathe which saw ENO partner with Imperial College NHS Healthcare Trust to support patients recovering from Covid-19, and continue training programmes for young people, whilst ensuring financial stability.

English National Opera offers completely free tickets to under 18 years, and throughout lockdown has continued to create innovative new work including the UK's first drive-in opera – ENO Drive and Live's La Boheme at Alexandra Palace. ENO also worked with partner schools across the country on the creative photography project I am Here, in which Year 7 students captured

their self-portrait – these images are now used by ENO to fill seats left empty at the London Coliseum due to social distancing.

Historic Royal Palaces – £40,000,000 in repayable financing will help Historic Royal Palaces return to financial stability whilst conserving world renowned historic sites like the Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace and presenting its nationally important collections to visitors.

Historic Royal Palaces cares for some of the best-known palaces in the world, including the Tower of London UNESCO World Heritage Site, home of the Crown Jewels and the UK's most visited paid cultural site. Together, the palaces usually attract millions of visitors from around the world and host 250,000 school children every year, and are the venues for national commemoration and the performing arts.

Michael Harrison Entertainment – A loan of £4,500,000 will help Michael Harrison Entertainment meet existing financial commitments for programmed productions.

Michael Harrison's West End musicals include Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at the London Palladium, Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein at the Garrick, Annie at the Piccadilly, Mrs Henderson Presents at the Noel Coward, Gypsy at the Savoy and The Bodyguard at the Adelphi and Dominion Theatres.

London Theatre Company – £5,000,000 will help the London Theatre Company return to financial viability throughout the winter and stage full-scale productions from the spring.

The London Theatre Company was founded by Nicholas Hytner and Nick Starr. The company built The Bridge, London's first new large-scale commercial theatre for 50 years, opened in 2017 and has hosted leading names in British theatre including Ben Whishaw, Laura Linney, Jim Broadbent, Michelle Fairley, Simon Russell Beale, Ralph Fiennes and Maggie Smith.

Mark Goucher Productions Ltd – Mark Goucher Productions Ltd – A loan of £4,075,000 will restart productions across the West End and touring the UK when it is safe to do so, providing employment for freelance actors, artists, musicians and stage technicians, as well as creating work for suppliers like set and props builders, costume makers, sound, lighting and audio-visual hire companies and transport companies.

Mark Goucher Productions produces plays and musicals in the West End and on tour around the UK. Recent productions include The Man in the White Suit, Jeeves and Wooster and Yes, Prime Minister. The Culture Recovery Fund will allow Mark Goucher Productions to resume the tours of both musicals Hairspray and Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. It will also allow the company to restage Slava's Snowshow and also stage a new production of Murder on the Orient Express.

Find out more about the [Here For Culture Campaign](#) and the [Culture Recovery Fund](#).