Dear Secretary of State

With the easing of restrictions this week, many musicians and those who work across the creative industries are looking forward to being able to return to work as venues open at full capacity for the first time since March 2020.

It is important that this return happens safely, so that musicians can return to live performance in a sustainable way. Therefore, it is absolutely vital that there is a clear understanding of the rules and regulations in relation to Covid-19 restrictions.

Many musicians and those who work in venues will have reacted with confusion when they heard Business Minister Paul Scully tell Times Radio this morning “the app is there to allow you to make informed decisions... obviously it's up to individuals and employers”.

There are further reports that another minister, Lord Grimstone wrote to employers emphasising that employees are not legally bound to isolate if they receive a notification from the NHS track and trace app.

At this crucial time for the creative industries, we need clarity about the rules and what steps contractors, performers and audiences should take to ensure performances can go ahead, while at the same time ensuring we keep each other safe.

Most musicians who work in performance do so on a freelance basis and are therefore not entitled to the same financial support as employees if they cannot work due to self-isolation. They are overwhelmingly keen to work within the Government guidance and clarity is even more important when the ability to earn is at risk.

Just yesterday Andrew Lloyd Webber cancelled the planned launch of Cinderella as a member of the team tested positive for Covid-19 and there have been many other reports of live events being cancelled due to self-isolation notifications and positive Covid-19 cases. A government supported reinsurance scheme will also be vital for the long-term sustainability of the sector given the high likelihood of ongoing disruption.
I would be grateful if you could clarify the rules around self-isolation instructions with a particular emphasis on how those rules should work for the many event venues that have reopened, or are welcoming back larger audiences, for the first time this week. Yours sincerely

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