**Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee inquiry into major cultural and sporting events**

**Date: May 2021**

**British Entertainment Industry Radio Group (BEIRG)**

**Contact Details:**

Anna Wolffe

Ranelagh Political Communications on behalf of the BEIRG Steering Committee

3.1 Central House

Ballards Lane

London N3 1LQ

**Tel: 020 3642 2754 / 07960 793315**

**anna.wolffe@ranelaghuk.com**

**Introduction**

* BEIRG welcomes the Select Committee Inquiry into major cultural and sporting events. The events industry, including all those who give behind the scenes support, is a sector that has suffered hugely during the pandemic.
* Planning for events in 2022 will no doubt gives all those who have been unable to work a huge boost but the events industry supply chain needs certainty and support from Government and Ofcom in order to be successful.
* We have noted the points made by #WeMakeEvents and fully endorse their submission.

**Impact of COVID**

* Prior to March 2020, the UK live events industry brought in over £70 billion a year. The sector supports over 700,000 jobs, many of whom are highly-skilled freelance or self-employed roles in the live event supply chain. Research by UK Music shows that 72% of their sector works as self-employed.
* A survey conducted by #WeMakeEvents at the beginning of this year revealed the devastation reaped on the sector by Covid-19 with over 93% of individuals and businesses in the live event supply chain seeing a fall in their income as a result of the pandemic. 34% of individuals and businesses have received no Government support – either through loans, furlough, local or national grants. Most worryingly, 43% of live event supply chain businesses say they do not have the resources to last until 1 June.
* On a more positive note, the sector is conscious of a huge demand for live events as we ease out of lockdown and is optimistic that this will drive recovery. A crucial part of this will be major cultural and sporting events in 2022. With Festival UK\* 2022’s total budget currently £120m alone, and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham already well progressed, the many major live events planned for 2022 represent a substantial opportunity for the live event supply chain to return to pre-pandemic levels.

**British Entertainment Industry Radio Group**

* The British Entertainment Industry Radio Group (BEIRG) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works for the benefit of all those who produce, distribute and ultimately consume content made using radio spectrum in the UK. Venues and productions that depend on radio spectrum include TV, film, sport, theatre, churches, schools, live music (including music festivals), newsgathering, political and corporate events, and many others. BEIRG campaigns for the maintenance of ‘Programme Making and Special Events’ (PMSE) access to sufficient quantity of interference-free spectrum for use by wireless production tools such as wireless microphones and wireless in-ear monitor (IEM) systems.
* As well as being vital in producing live content, wireless audio PMSE technologies play a key role in helping to improve security and safety levels within the entertainment industry and other sectors. Their benefits include improving the management of electrical safety, the reduction of noise levels, the development of safety in communications and reducing trip hazards as well as providing an essential tool for the security orientated services. Wireless equipment and the spectrum it operates in are now crucial to the British entertainment industry.
* BEIRG is a member of the Association of Professional Wireless Production Technologies (APWPT)[[1]](#footnote-1), which promotes on an international level the efficient and demand-driven provision and use of production frequencies for professional event productions, as well as safeguarding such production frequencies for the users on the long run.

**Programme Making and Special Events**

* On a daily basis, the Programme Making and Special Events Sector (PMSE) is responsible for the production of content that has received world-wide acclaim and continues to attract a global audience. A vast array of organisations are reliant on spectrum for the production of content for Performing Arts, Broadcasting, News Gathering, Independent Film and TV Production, Corporate Events, Concerts, Night Venues and Sports Events.
* Wireless equipment and the spectrum in which PMSE operates are crucial to the British Entertainment and Events Industry. According to the BVEP UK Events Report published in 2021, the overall events and entertainment industry generates in excess of £70bn a year for the UK economy. The PMSE sector plays a significant part in the delivery of all these events – for example arts and cultural, music festivals and events, and sporting events contribute £38.8bn annually.
* However, in order to continue to support live events, the PMSE sector requires some security of tenure and reassurance that they will not be moved into another spectrum band, as has already happened twice recently. The upheaval for those who provide content and support our creative industries cannot be over-stated and another move would have a highly damaging impact on the PMSE community.  Without the support of PMSE and up to date equipment to ensure high quality delivery, these events simply cannot take place as expected. In relation to the bid for the 2030 World Cup, spectrum usage must be considered as a key component in order to deliver the World Cup and all association programming and events that will run alongside the football.

**Conclusion**

* BEIRG members look forward to returning to work and contributing to the major sporting and cultural events of 2022.
* However to ensure the supply chain can work without disruption, the PMSE community need support and security from Government and Ofcom to continue to be as effective as possible.
1. <http://www.apwpt.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)