

EventScotland National and International Event Funding Programmes - Equality Impact Assessment

February 2023

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Name of Grant: EventScotland National and International Event Funding Programmes

Policy Lead: Rachael McKechnie, Deputy Director, Major Events and Themed Years Policy

Legal power used

As VisitScotland is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPD) it is covered by the Scottish Budget in particular Schedule 1 purpose 8 of the Budget (Scotland) Act 2021 which gives the Scottish Ministers the power to fund tourism.

Funding is delivered through the grant making powers of:

- Sections 126 and 127 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. It is made on the basis that the funding is fostering employment as an express purpose as well as stopping areas being blighted by the collapse of employment; and
- Section 23 of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 that gives Scottish Ministers authority to make payments to anybody who appears likely to promote the development or understanding of cultural or scientific matters.

Grant Overview

Funding through VisitScotland's National and International schemes is intended to support restart of Scotland's events sector following a period of restrictions put in place in late 2021 and early 2022 due to the Omicron variant of COVID-19 by providing support funding to help events to take place.

Relaunched in January 2022, the National and International Events Programmes support the development and delivery of live sporting and cultural events that take place outside of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The National and International Events Programmes are two of the core funds run by EventScotland, designed to assist in the delivery of the National Events Strategy, Scotland the Perfect Stage, and to contribute to the wider recovery of the tourism and events sector in Scotland.

The [International Fund](#) funds major events which raise the profile of Scotland's Perfect Stage around the world. Through this programme events are supported by: working in partnership with local authorities and governing bodies on bids to secure major international properties for Scotland; communicating directly with event organisers for annual events where VisitScotland has an established relationship, and; actively looking for new and existing events to bring to Scotland for the first time.

Events supported through the International Funding Programme must:

Generate substantial economic benefits for Scotland through increased visitation including tourists, spectators and participants

Highlight Scotland as an events and tourism destination through high profile, international media coverage

Enhance Scotland's opportunities to host further major events

The objective of the [National Programme](#) is to develop a portfolio of events that generate economic benefits for specific regions of Scotland; attract visitors to these regions from other parts of the country and beyond; enhance the profile of the host region and to inspire and involve local communities. The programme is designed to support additional elements or new activity specifically intended to develop, enhance and/or grow events. It is a competitive programme, open to cultural and supporting events that take place across Scotland outwith Edinburgh and Glasgow. There is support available for both community focused events and events supporting the wider visitor economy:

Community Events: awards of between £2,000 and £4,000 are available for eligible event organisers of community focused events within Scotland with overall delivery budgets between £8,000 to £20,000 and attracting a minimum of 500 in-person attendees. Funds can be used to support eligible sustainable development costs.

Events supporting the visitor economy: awards of between £5,000 and £25,000 are available to larger scale events which can demonstrate alignment with the key impact areas identified in our National Events Strategy, Scotland the Perfect Stage. These events will have delivery budgets in excess of £20,000 and attract more than 1,000 in-person attendees. Funds can be used to support eligible sustainable development costs as set out on this page.

Executive Summary

Strategic Context

Events make a key contribution to Scotland's economy, boost Scotland's profile internationally and can enhance community engagement, empowerment and inclusion. Events can act as a catalyst for investment in infrastructure and built environment. They can increase tourism in the long term due to strengthened brand and improved infrastructure.

The Scottish Government recognises the massive impact that COVID-19 has had on the events sector in Scotland. As the events sector overlaps with other sectors and acts as a driver for other sectors such as tourism and hospitality, it's not straightforward to measure its impact. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some event activity moved to broadcast only or online, however, thus far online activity has proved difficult to monetise.

As such, fluctuating levels of restrictions have been particularly difficult for events as organisers and suppliers have had little certainty about whether their event will actually be able to take place, resulting in them carrying significant risk, in particular regarding the financial viability of an event. This was the case in late 2021 and 2022 when restrictions on events were brought in at relatively short notice in order to address the risk posed by the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

Fluctuating levels of restrictions and levels of COVID-19 have also changed customer confidence and behaviours in returning to attending events. These

behaviours often change depending on the demographic of those attending events, for example events which older audience demographics have tended to see lower attendance compared to events with younger audience demographics. Therefore events can see ticket and on site sales vary depending on the event and who is attending.

In addition, the cost of living crisis is impacting attendees and event organisers alike¹. Researchers have raised concerns that the economic impact of cultural events would be reduced compared to pre-Covid levels, as some people are unwilling to visit “multiple places” in one evening or meet people outside of their own household. This is another factor which event organisers are facing

The events sector is important to the recovery of Scotland’s economy. This funding will be of benefit to the event businesses directly, and those employed within them, and also allows for the potential of wider benefits from customer expenditure to be restored. Furthermore, it has had a wider positive impact on social interactions and the general wellbeing economy of Scotland. Without this funding it would be more challenging for the events sector to restart.

Actions Taken to Ensure Equality

In order to address the needs of many sectors adversely impacted by the Omicron variant, a range of business support funds were introduced in early 2022 to provide funding to help secure jobs, safeguard businesses and to alleviate hardship, including the Events Industry Support Fund 3² and the Event Sector Top Up Funds (for which a separate EQIA has been undertaken) and the Programmes covered in this EQIA. The goal of these funds is to stimulate the events sector, supporting its recovery.

Within this context of needing to react quickly as businesses needed certainty about whether funding would be available in order to make decisions about proceeding with events (due to lead-in times to prepare) and as these funds were being delivered at the close of the financial year, there was limited opportunity to gather evidence on the possible impacts of funding streams. Therefore this document draws upon the Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment³ undertaken for Events Sector Guidance, which also helped frame assessment for the Pivotal Event Business Fund (PEBF) and Event Industry Support Fund (SERF) 1&2, supporting consideration of the impact of events on people with protected characteristics. We also discussed funding with the Events Industry Advisory Group in December 2021⁴. We think that this funding is likely to have most differential impact on people with protected characteristics relating to age, race, disability and gender. This is discussed in more detail in the Key Findings section below.

¹ [Scottish culture has warned of a "significant" threat from the cost of living crisis | Latest Page News](#)

² [Event Industry Support Fund 3](#)

³ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): events sector guidance: equality and Fairer Scotland impact assessment](#)

⁴ [Event Industry Advisory Group - Updates & Guidance](#)

KEY FINDINGS - Impact assessment of benefits and/or disadvantages

Given the unprecedented nature of the pandemic we are aware that there are gaps in knowledge and in the evidence base. We are developing data, research and understanding of lived experience as we move forward.⁵ The headline data, engagement and information gathered to underpin the Event Sector Guidance and other events EQIA's in the context of COVID-19, and which is also relevant here includes:

Age: Older People and Children and Young People The Annual Population Survey 2019 found that approximately 51% of the events workforce is under the age of 35 compared to around 35% for Scotland's workforce as a whole. A disproportionately young workforce could result in a heightened risk and impact (in terms of lost lifetime earnings) of unemployment in the industry.

The Scottish Household Survey figures shows levels of cultural attendance, in 2020, when excluding reading, adults aged 16 to 24 (76%) were more likely to have participated in a cultural activity than adults aged 75 or over (44%).

Therefore providing support to businesses through National and International funding so that they can resume activity, could disproportionately positively impact on young people who are more likely to work for these businesses compared to the wider workforce. This funding could also disproportionately positively impact on young people attending events as it is more likely people from younger demographics will wish to attend events.

Sex: Men and Women

The proportion of women aged 16 and over in employment in the events sector is higher than the proportion of women in employment in Scotland overall – 54.9% and 49.1% respectively.⁶

Research has highlighted a disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women. Women are more likely to have reduced hours, been made redundant, and been furloughed. Women working from home have had additional responsibilities (childcare and work). Not all women have been affected equally – young and minority ethnic women are more affected and pregnant women are also significantly impacted. Mothers are 23% more likely than fathers to have lost their jobs (temporarily or permanently) during the current crisis. Of those who were in paid work prior to the lockdown, mothers are 47% more likely than fathers to have permanently lost their job or quit, and they are 14% more likely to have been furloughed.⁷

⁵ [Equality Evidence](#)

⁶ [Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2021, ONS - ONS Annual Population Survey \(APS\) responses for periods April 2019-March 2020 onwards are weighted to new populations derived using growth rates from HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\) Real Time Information \(RTI\) to allow for different trends during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic. The new weighting methodology gave improved estimates for both rates and levels following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. ONS plan to reweight the APS data again later this year using newly available RTI data.](#)

⁷ [Parents, especially mothers, paying heavy price for lockdown - Institute For Fiscal Studies - IFS](#)

The priority of this funding support is to help businesses resume activity following the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions. Therefore, this funding could have a disproportionately positive impact on women working in Events Catering Activities and women working in other reservation service and related activities. This funding may also support female employment within the sector through supporting employers and event organisers within the event sector.

Race

With the events sector often making significant use of casual labour, Eastern European, African and other ethnic minority communities have been identified as potentially at risk groups of being affected by COVID-19.

According to the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network (Scotland) which is coordinated by BEMIS Scotland, minority ethnic communities have disproportionate vulnerabilities to COVID-19. This is represented in both social and health outcomes. For example, due to the immigration status of some minority ethnic individuals it is financially harder to self-isolate because their precarious employment circumstances mean they may have not received support such as furlough pay or state benefits. This means they are more likely to work in low paid and non-unionised work environments where regulations are not being appropriately adhered to.

In 2020, cultural attendance (including cinema) was highest for 'White: Other' adults (65 per cent). 51 per cent of minority ethnic adults had attended or visited a cultural event or place compared with 42 per cent for 'White: Scottish' adults and 48 per cent for 'White: Other British' adults (Table 4.8). However, these differences were found not to be statistically significant.⁸

These schemes are in place to support the resumption of events activity and may therefore have a positive impact on Minority Ethnic people employed in the sector and have a positive wellbeing impact to those attending events, including those from ethnic minorities.

Disability

In 2019, 27.5% of the workforce had a self-reported long-term condition (lasting 12 months or more), including 29.3% of the Transport and Storage workforce, 28.2% of the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation workforce, and 26.6% of the Accommodation and Food Services workforce.⁹ We have not been able to source any specific data on the number of disabled people working in events businesses so we have considered this wider data as a proxy measure.

In the Scottish Household Survey, 'disability' is defined as the presence of any physical or mental health condition or illness that is expected to last 12 months or more, and that reduces the person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Attendance at cultural events or places of culture varied by disability in 2020. Only 32% of adults with a disability had attended a cultural event or place of culture, compared to 48% of non-disabled adults. The top concerns that disabled people have about visiting places as restrictions lift and events resume are: people not

⁸ [Scottish Household Survey 2020 Telephone Survey Culture and Heritage Report \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

⁹ [Scotland's Labour Market: People, Places, and Regions - Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2019](#)

respecting and honouring physical distancing; not having access to venues' or public toilets when outside; and having to queue or wait outside venues, especially when weather is bad.¹⁰

These schemes are in place to support the resumption of events activity and may therefore have a positive impact on disabled people employed in the sector and have a positive wellbeing impact to those attending events, including disabled people.

Religion and Belief

There is no evidence of a differential impact identified at this time

Sexual Orientation

There is no evidence of a differential impact identified at this time

Pregnancy and maternity

There is no evidence of a differential impact identified at this time

Gender reassignment

There is no evidence of a differential impact identified at this time

Marriage or Civil Partnership

There is no evidence of a differential impact identified at this time

Socio-economic disadvantage: any people experiencing poverty

Poverty has higher prevalence across protected characteristics. For example, risk of poverty is much higher for women, disabled people, minority ethnic people, lone parents, and children and young people. We know that work does not fully protect against poverty, with 60% of adults in poverty being in work¹¹. The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates that low earners were seven times more likely than high earners to have worked in a sector that has shut down as a result of the lockdown in 2020.¹² Around 78% of workers in the events sector earn at or above the Living Wage compared with 83% of all Scottish employees.¹³

This means that COVID-19 restrictions on the events sector may have a disproportionate impact on people earning below the Living Wage and so providing funding support to resume activity in the event sector may have a disproportionate impact on these people through retaining businesses and jobs in the sector in the longer term as events restart.

Adults from the most deprived areas are less likely than those from the least deprived areas to attend an event. 36% of adults living in the 20% most deprived areas had attended a cultural event or place of culture, including the cinema, compared to 53% of adults living in the 20% least deprived areas.¹⁴

¹⁰ [Covid Concerns euansguide](#)

¹¹ [Poverty and income inequality statistics](#)

¹² [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): events sector guidance: equality and Fairer Scotland impact assessment](#)

¹³ [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#)

¹⁴ [Scottish Household Survey 2020 Telephone Survey Culture and Heritage Report](#)

Engagement with the events sector did not raise any specific concerns about differential impacts of COVID-19 (restrictions) and development of funding support on people with any of the protected characteristics. However, it did provide feedback that some parts of the events sector rely on zero hours workers, who may be more likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage.

The Scottish Government wants to promote Fair Work. Fair Work First principles are included in VisitScotland's funding application process, including for the National and International scheme.

Stakeholder Engagement

We recognise that the events sector was one of the first to lock down in March 2020 and one of the last to restart fully in late summer 2021, and experienced more stringent measures than many other sectors during the outbreak of the Omicron variant. These support funds show we remain committed to the support and recovery of the sector, and to the underpinning public health measures as well as supporting public confidence to return to the full range of business, sporting, and cultural events.

When developing these funds we spoke to stakeholders, including the Event Industry Advisory Group on 22 December 2021¹⁵ and drew upon feedback from applicants and two online surveys of the event industry supply chain conducted by VisitScotland's Events Directorate in 2020. We also drew on the EQIA prepared for the COVID-19 Events Sector Guidance¹⁶ which was developed following consultation with a range of organisations representing people with one or more protected characteristics.

This provided an opportunity to listen to stakeholder views, test ideas, share information about progress and discuss and address specific issues identified by the sector and individual businesses.

Mitigations

Both the International and National events funds are existing funding programmes that have been used to support the events industry recover from the pandemic. Mitigations will be principally focused on ensuring that application processes are accessible through administration by VisitScotland/EventScotland.

To help to ensure accessibility for funding, VisitScotland ensured that there were multiple channels of communication and submission for the applicant if they have accessibility issues (online and by telephone). The main way for events businesses to apply for National and International funds were through email to a dedicated point in EventScotland and provide the relevant application form. However, if an applicant required any accessibility adjustments EventScotland highlight that this would be possible.

¹⁵ [Event Industry Advisory Group - Updates & Guidance](#)

¹⁶ [Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Results - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): events sector guidance: equality and Fairer Scotland impact assessment](#)

EventScotland's Event Manager's offered support to applicants who may have wished to submit an enquiry or arrange a meeting to discuss whether their event meets the criteria of the programme. this is particularly relevant (but not solely) to those applying for the International Fund.

Dedicated email contact points were set up and VisitScotland reception redirected any calls to appropriate staff. VisitScotland provided within application guidance an email contact point for those applying who wish to apply in an alternative format. These measures were intended to boost inclusion and ensure that people with a range of protected characteristics could access the funding support.

Next Steps

The Scottish Government will undertake an exercise to identify lessons from across the various COVID-19 funding schemes, including events. The Scottish Government will work with VisitScotland and other public bodies such as Creative Scotland, where appropriate, to capture learnings on how the events funding was delivered, including learning in terms of equalities and socioeconomic impacts, and improvements that could be made. This will inform the proactive development of options for future COVID-19 specific and other funding schemes, and any areas of learning that can be applied to events funding schemes more generally.

Declaration and Publication

I have read the Equality Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that it represents a fair and reasonable view of the expected equality impact of the measures implemented.

Signed: Rachael McKechnie

Date: 9 August 2022



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