

UK GOVERNMENT EVENTS RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Aim of this research programme

The Events Research Programme aims to examine the risk of transmission of Covid-19 from attendance at events and explore ways to enable people to attend a range of events safely.

To achieve this, the programme will explore how a combination of testing and non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs - actions that people can take to mitigate the spread of coronavirus) can inform decisions on safely lifting restrictions at events.

What this research programme will involve

The ERP is running its first phase of 10-15 pilots in April and May to inform decisions on the safe removal of social distancing from Step 4 of the [roadmap](#). The pilots will be run across a range of settings, venue types, and activity types so that findings could support the full reopening of similar settings across multiple sectors.

Who's involved in the ERP and how it will be run

The programme is overseen by an industry-led steering group co-chaired by Sir Nicholas Hytner and David Ross and working closely with national and local public health authorities. The board will consider the evidence from the pilot events and make recommendations to the Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State for DCMS, BEIS and DHSC on how restrictions could be safely lifted.

A Joint Programme Board will work across government to inform policy development on reopening sectors ahead of Step 4 of the [roadmap](#).

The Programme Board will seek advice from external experts, other government departments who have an interest in the research work, the scientific community through the cross-Whitehall Chief Scientific Advisors network, and other stakeholder groups.

The governance structure will also include an independently chaired Science Board, which will bring together clinical and scientific experts. The Science Board will provide scientific assurance across the programme and ensure events are following ethical and scientific principles and will generate evidence of sufficient quality to inform decisions.

Science Board Members:

- (Chair) Professor Dame Theresa Marteau
- Prof Tom Rodden- DCMS CSA
- Prof Paul Monks - BEIS CSA

Scientific Board Members covering the following areas:

- Dr Jenifer Smith - Public health
- Dr Shaun Fitzgerald - Ventilation
- Prof John Edmunds - Modelling

- Prof James Calder - Testing
- Prof Michael Parker - Ethics
- Jennet Woolford - Analysis

Managing risk

Public safety is our main priority and decisions will be guided by a Science Board of relevant experts including senior PHE representation, who will take into account the latest public health data. All pilots will be designed in a scientifically controlled way, with special consideration to reduce risk of transmission.

Entry will be subject to a negative test result. In practice this will work in much the same way that international travel has taken place in recent months - entry will be denied to those that cannot provide evidence of a negative test result.

We have put careful consideration into the timing of this study, particularly with regard to progress of the vaccination programme. Over 98 per cent of people at risk of death from Covid-19 have been vaccinated, which significantly lowers the risk posed.

Testing safety

The ERP will look at a range of mitigating factors including test-on-entry protocols for use in determining how we can reopen larger venues safely.

These protocols will be used in combination with the suspension of NPIs (face coverings, social distancing) to test what works best to achieve the aim of returning greater numbers of fans back to indoor and outdoor venues.

Pilot events

The ERP's first phase of pilots includes:

- FA Cup Semi Final, Wembley Stadium
- World Snooker Championship, Sheffield Crucible Theatre
- Luna Cinema, Liverpool
- League Cup Final
- ACC Business Event, Liverpool
- Circus Nightclub, Liverpool
- FA Cup Final, Wembley Stadium
- The BRIT Awards, London
- Outdoor gig, Sefton Park Liverpool

Government has selected events based on settings that cover a range of criteria, including different audience capacities, outdoor and indoor venues and different layouts.

We will test some settings and layouts more than once (eg, Wembley) thereby increasing the sample size. Pilot findings will be scalable and transferable across different sectors, maximising the output from a small number of studies.

All events will be subject to national and local approvals. Further events may be announced in due course.

Sectors represented in the pilot events

The pilots will be run across a range of settings, venue types, and activity types (e.g. seated or not, indoor/outdoor etc) so that findings can inform thinking on the reopening of similar settings across multiple sectors.

Our priority is to set up ethical and logistically deliverable pilots in as short a time frame as possible. Whilst we would like to hold pilot events in as many regions as possible, unfortunately it is not logistically feasible at this stage to run a large number of pilot events.

Each pilot event requires considerable operational and logistical planning and resource from scientists in order to properly assess the effectiveness of reducing social distancing using different mitigations.

Making the results of the research available

The initial research pilots will take place in April and May. Findings will be reported to the Prime Minister to feed into wider discussions around Step 4 of the lockdown restrictions.

We will ensure that the results gathered from research programmes are fed into policy development swiftly to ensure data is used to inform decisions around further reopening.

Attendance of high risk groups

The pilot events are the first steps to helping all members of the public safely back to mass events and these have been developed under a SAGE framework in line with the latest PHE and DHSC guidance.

Our Science Board has reviewed the Events Research Programme's approach to clinically extremely vulnerable individuals attending the pilot events.

They strongly urge caution for the clinically extremely vulnerable attending the events on public health grounds, however these groups are not excluded from involvement in the pilots.

All attendees are required to fill out a consent form as part of the sign up process for the research programme, given the increased risk of COVID 19 transmission on account of the relaxation of some risk mitigation factors (social distancing and numbers attending).

Getting tickets for a pilot event

The events are scientific trials and each event may have different criteria for the selection of participants. We are working with event organisers to identify suitable participants from their usual customer base.

Travelling to pilot events

The majority of attendees who attend the ERP events will be local to the venue. However, attendees with valid ERP tickets can travel to the event in line with HMG [guidance](#).

Additional travel requirements may be stipulated by event organisers and local authorities so we would encourage participants to check before they travel to an ERP event.

Covid status certification

There will be no requirement for participants to show proof of vaccine.

Participants in the ERP pilots published to date will have to provide a basic covid certification that they have tested negative for Covid-19.

Scale of events

The numbers involved in each event has been decided in consultation with local stakeholders, but the larger events in the programme are likely to involve several thousand participants.

Testing and ticketing

Testing will largely be delivered through the existing community testing network, with results validated by the event organisers before ticket-holders are admitted to the venue.

Alcohol consumption

Due to the pilots existing outside of the covid regulations, serving alcohol needs to be agreed by local authorities in advance. This will take into account any concerns they may have around associated behaviours from a local public health perspective.

Negative test and entry to events

Yes, entry will be subject to a negative test result. In practice this will work in much the same way that international travel has taken place in recent months - entry will be denied to those that cannot provide evidence of a negative test result.

Science Board members

The Science Board is chaired by independent scientist Dame Theresa Marteau, and is made up of relevant cross-Government Chief Scientific Advisors, led by Tom Rodden (DCMS CSA) and Paul Monks (BEIS CSA), and leading external scientists.

There are scientific representatives covering public health, behavioural research, environmental research, health clinicians, ventilation, ethics and analysis.

Proving a negative Covid test

In order to attend the event, attendees will be required to have a Lateral Flow Technology (LFT) test (with a negative result) ahead of the event. Attendees will also be asked to take a PCR test before and after the event to inform research and ensure any transmission of the virus is properly monitored.

Contact details

Full contact details of those attending will be required at all pilots.

The Events Research Programme is a scientific project that will provide a report once the programme has been concluded and we cannot preempt the outcomes of this study in advance.

Monitoring people travelling to and from events

All attendees at pilot events will be subject to scientifically and ethically designed pre- and post-event monitoring, which they will agree to when signing up to attend the event.

The majority of attendees who attend the ERP events will be local to the venue. However attendees with valid ERP tickets can travel to the event in line with HMG [guidance](#).

Additional travel requirements may be stipulated by event organisers and local authorities so we would encourage participants to check before they travel to an ERP event.

Enforcement during the event

All events will be subject to approval by Safety Advisory Groups, where security and stewarding plans and associated policing levels will need to be agreed by the local police authority.

Employee testing

All employers with workers in England who can't work from home can sign up for free on-site rapid workplace testing, including those still closed due to lockdown. Each police force and public sector organisation is able to access this offer and will be responsible for testing their workforce.

Regulation changes

The regulations have been laid giving Secretaries of State the power to disapply restrictions to cover ERP events. That a Secretary of State may, by direction, disapply any relevant restriction or requirement in relation to specified premises, a specified event or a specified gathering as part of the events research programme.

Liability

Any litigation arising from a claim that a spectator contracted coronavirus at a ERP event which resulted related personal injury or death would be determined by a Court.

Media attendance

As with all ticketed events, press accreditation is a matter for the event organisers.

Attending an event in a group / as a family and the rule of six

Each ERP event is subject to an official ministerial direction which allows the event to be exempt from the wider covid regulations, including the rule of six. The attendees and capacity number of ERP events will follow the guidelines of the Science Board's research methodology.

Where to take a test before attending an event

In order to attend the event, participants will be required to have a Lateral Flow Technology (LFT) test ahead of the event. They will have to demonstrate they tested negatively before they are admitted to the event. They will also be asked to take a PCR test before and after the event to inform research and ensure any transmission of the virus is properly monitored. Attendees should take a LFT test before they travel to an event outside their local area.

Information on specific research at events

As part of the sign up process for attending the event, each attendee will be provided with information which will include the scientific research to be conducted at the event, and where you are invited to take part.

Accommodation

Under Step 2 of the [roadmap](#) fans travelling to and from events will only be permitted to stay in self-contained accommodation where indoor facilities are not shared with other households.

Managing social distancing at arrivals and departures for each event

Public safety is our main priority and we are working with our event organisers on this. The ERP's work includes all pilots being designed in a scientifically controlled way, with special consideration to reduce risk of transmission.

Sanitizer and face masks

Hand sanitizer will be available at all events. Attendees should bring their own face masks, as they may still be required to use these when travelling to and from the venue, or around the venue.

Taking a test after the event and what happens if it's positive

Attendees will be asked to take a PCR test within five days of attending an event. If they test positive they will be required to self-isolate in accordance with existing government [guidance](#)