



House of Commons
Culture, Media and Sport
Committee

**Grassroots music
venues**

Seventh Report of Session 2023–24

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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The Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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Summary

As one of only three net exporters globally and with a multi-billion-pound industry in terms of gross value added to the economy, the UK is a music powerhouse. Live music is a key part of this success, contributing £5.2 billion and supporting 228,000 full- and part-time jobs in 2022, even after the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, grassroots live music venues, the local, limited capacity venues integral to the pipeline of creative and professional talent and key fixtures of our communities, are now facing a crisis of soaring costs and closures. These venues are stopping live music or closing entirely at a rate of two per week. Artists, and the people who rely on them for business, are facing a cost-of-touring crisis and finding opportunities squeezed. Promoters are less able to put on shows or make them financially viable. Festivals, electronic music venues and even academies and arenas are not insulated from the impacts. A comprehensive review by the Government is now needed to fully examine the long-term challenges to the live music ecosystem. This should be launched as a matter of urgency by summer 2024 and cover the perspectives of everyone affected, including fans.

While we found arguments for a compulsory levy to be compelling in principle, as a fair and sustainable mechanism, we understand why stakeholders have coalesced around a voluntary system in recognition of the urgency of the crisis and the need to build consensus. We call for a widespread voluntary levy to be in place no later than September 2024, to be followed by an assessment by the Government on its effectiveness. However, if a widespread voluntary levy is not in place by September 2024, or if its level does not stem the tide of closures, the Government should introduce a statutory scheme. Any scheme must be accessible to venues, artists and promoters.

The Government should also introduce a targeted, temporary cut to VAT to stimulate grassroots music activity and help the sector through the current closure crisis, and must provide certainty on the future of business rates relief.

While we welcome the Arts Council England (ACE)'s efforts to address access to public funding for the sector, perceptions about access remain the same. The Government and ACE should take steps to reduce the administrative burden in applications.

Intra-industry disputes, regarding PRS for Music and commission on merchandise sales, should be resolved within industry at the first instance. The comprehensive review of PRS's tariffs, due to begin in summer 2024, is a useful opportunity to consider how venues' and promoters' concerns with PRS can be mitigated for the next period. We call on all stakeholders across the industry to continue to support the artist trade body Featured Artists' Coalition in its campaign to end punitive fees on artists' merchandise and ensure take-up among their members.

Venues are also facing widespread risk of closure due to planning and redevelopment-related issues. The Government made progress by including an "agent of change principle" in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This principle should be put on a statutory footing at the earliest opportunity.

1 Introduction

1. The UK music industry is a cultural and economic powerhouse. The UK is one of only three net exporters of music and second overall behind only the United States.¹ In 2022, the core music industry contributed £6.7 billion to the UK economy in terms of the gross value added (GVA) just from its main commercial activities—composing, recording, live music and artists’ brands—generating £4 billion in exports and directly employing 210,000 people.² It also supports a wider economy across the country, ranging from broadcasting, trade press and teaching, to services that rely on live music such as security and catering, which create further economic impact and job opportunities.³

2. The live music sector is a significant contributor to the success of the music industry as a whole. According to the sector’s umbrella body Live Music Industry Venues and Entertainment (LIVE), the breadth of live music activity contributed £5.2 billion GVA and supported 228,000 full- and part-time jobs in 2022, despite the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic and related public health measures.⁴ That same year attendances reached a record high 37 million across all festivals and concerts.⁵ 14.4 million of these attendees were music tourists, of which 13.3 million travelled domestically and 1.1 million travelled from abroad.⁶

3. The grassroots music venue (GMV) circuit plays an integral role within the live music sector. GMVs are the local, relatively limited capacity spaces whose main purpose is to host live performances and that have the licences, staff, infrastructure and amenities to do so.⁷ Collectively, they hosted approximately 21.9 million audience visits across 176,000 events featuring over 1.6 million individual artist performances in 2022.⁸ For communities, they are a key fixture of high streets and town centres and the primary way for local communities to access live music and experience UK culture and creativity.⁹ Economically, GMVs have directly contributed £500 million per year over the past two years.¹⁰ Through programming and hosting events, venues subsidised the development of new music by £79 million in 2022 and £115 million in 2023.¹¹ For every 10,000 people who attended a gig, £1 million was spent in the local economy, ranging from hotels, restaurants and pubs, to transport, equipment hire, photography and insurance, and so on.¹²

4. From a music perspective, the grassroots are where artists, technicians, tour managers, promoters and other industry professionals hone their craft, rehearse, experiment and—fundamentally—try to make a living.¹³ As Lily Fontaine, musician, songwriter and vocalist of English Teacher, told us, “it all began in grassroots venues for me and [...] the band”;

1 UK Music, ‘[Music Exports](#)’, accessed 8 April 2024

2 UK Music, [This is Music 2023](#) (2 November 2023), p. 10

3 UK Music, [This is Music 2023: Methodology document](#) (6 November 2023)

4 LIVE, ‘[Homepage](#)’, accessed 8 April 2024

5 UK Music, [This is Music 2023](#) (2 November 2023), p. 20

6 UK Music ([GMV0006](#))

7 The Music Venue Trust offer a definition of what constitutes a grassroots music venue, based on their cultural and social role, economic activity and amenities and infrastructure. (Music Venue Trust, ‘[GMVs definition](#)’, accessed 26 April 2024)

8 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2022](#) (23 January 2023), p. 7

9 [Q1 \[Mark Davyd\]](#), [Q87 \[Lily Fontaine\]](#), [Q96 \[Kwame Kwaten\]](#)

10 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2022](#) (23 January 2023), p.11; Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2023](#) (23 January 2024), p. 11

11 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 9

12 [Qq13 \[Jon Collins\]](#), [86 \[Lily Fontaine, Kwame Kwaten\]](#)

13 [Qq1–2, 4, 41–2, 79–82, 86–7](#)

they “provided a space for me to develop as a musician, learn how to be bad at it before learning how to be okay at it, and develop confidence; I started performing for money, which made me realise that it was a potential career”.¹⁴

The mechanics of live music

5. Putting on live music involves a complex ecosystem of music and non-music stakeholders underpinning every show. These include:

- **Artists**, (also known as performers), who create recorded music and perform live;
 - **Artist businesses**, an ecosystem of music industry professionals who support artists with business operations and allow them to focus on making music, which typically includes a manager and agent, as well as an accountant, lawyer, publicist and so on;
 - An artist’s agent may also contract a team to arrange, manage and operate a live show or tour when necessary, including a tour manager, show producer, touring musicians and a technician crew;
- **Music venue operators**, which may include a manager, booker, in-house promoter, programmer (who sets the creative direction), stage manager and sound/lighting technicians, who organise live shows from a creative, logistical and technical perspective, as well as front-of-house and back-of-house staff and security;
- **Promoters**, who bring the venue and artist together by renting the venue (where they are not employed in-house) and booking the artist (by paying a guarantee), underwriting ticket sales, planning, organising, marketing and promoting the show or tour, ensuring legal and regulatory compliance, and so on;
- **Songwriters, composers and arrangers**, who create the underlying lyrics and musical compositions to the songs being performed (and who may or may not be the same person/people as the artist), often represented by:
 - **Music publishers**, who may own, manage, control and enforce song rights on behalf of songwriters, composers and arrangers (broadly equivalent to the role of record labels for artists);
 - **PRS for Music**, a collective management organisation (CMO) that manages rights and collects revenues on behalf of songwriters, composers and music publishers and, in a joint venture with performers’ and record labels’ CMO PPL called PPL PRS Ltd, licences venues to put on live music; and
- **Local authorities**, who license the premises for its operations, such as the sale of alcohol, hosting late night entertainment and so on, and collect business rates, the tax charged on most non-domestic properties.

Additional groups with a direct or indirect stake in the ecosystem may include ticket sellers, ticketing platforms and pre-sale “preferred partners”, who may help get tickets to consumers; other local businesses, providing amenities such as accommodation, transport, food and beverages, and so on; landlords, developers, neighbours and other local stakeholders; central and devolved government and Arts Council England (ACE); and a host of others who fulfil a range of functions. A glossary of terms is included in the Annex to this report.¹⁵

The current state of live music

6. Despite the importance of GMVs to artists, local communities and the entire live music sector, grassroots music is in difficulty. The most recent Annual Report of the Music Venue Trust (MVT), the trade association for the GMV circuit, described 2023 as “the most challenging year for the [...] sector since [...] MVT was founded in 2014”.¹⁶ Creative UK put it more bluntly, saying “the grassroots music sector took a battering”.¹⁷ MVT’s membership network, the Music Venues Alliance (MVA), saw a net decline of 125 trading GMVs, with 148 lost and only 34 newly recognised. In total the number of GMVs declined from 960 to 835 in 2023, a net decrease of 13%.¹⁸ Of these, approximately half closed permanently as trading businesses and another half ceased hosting live music.¹⁹ Those 125 venues also represent a loss of as many as 30,000 shows (16% of GMV performance opportunities last year) and 4,000 jobs.²⁰

Our inquiry

7. We launched our inquiry at a panel event at MVT’s Venues Day in October 2023. The recurring message from venue operators was that the Committee should hear from as broad a range of perspectives from across the sector as possible. In response, we hosted two roundtable events with representatives from venues across the country: one in Manchester in late January and one in Westminster in early March. Attendees for the events were selected in conjunction with the Music Venue Trust, to ensure that we heard from the broadest possible range of grassroots music venues. A list of those who took part is included as an Annex to this report.²¹ We wish to put on record our thanks to the Night & Day Café for hosting our Manchester event, and to all those who helped to organise and attended our roundtables.

8. Ahead of and during our inquiry, we received dozens of emails from MPs, trade associations and venue operators and owners raising concerns about the plight of individual GMVs in their communities. We put the main themes from our roundtables and other evidence received to representatives from the brick-and-mortar sector, artists and artist businesses, promoters and PRS for Music in an evidence session on 26 March

15 See Annex 1.

16 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2023](#) (23 January 2024), p. 5

17 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 8

18 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2023](#) (23 January 2024), p. 9

19 Ibid.

20 [Q1](#)

21 See Annex 2.

2024. The session also followed up on several conclusions and recommendations made by our predecessor committee in its 2018–19 *Live music* inquiry.²² We are grateful to everyone who provided oral and written evidence and otherwise engaged with our work.

2 Grassroots music in crisis

Scale of the crisis

Venues and festivals

9. While the scope of our inquiry initially focused on the crisis of grassroots venue closures, evidence we have received and data from across the industry show that the crisis has extended to, and in many ways is mutually reinforcing, challenges to artists and the wider ecosystem.

10. Beyond grassroots music venues (GMVs), for example, live music is in a precarious position. As of March, the sector lost 29 festivals scheduled for this year alone to postponements, cancellations or permanent closure, which, when added to the losses during the Covid-19 pandemic, means 161 festivals have been lost since 2019.²³ Across the 24 UK arenas that make up the National Arena Association (NAA), the number of live performances fell by 12% in 2023.²⁴ Nonetheless, new arenas are opening, including the Co-op Live Arena,²⁵ providing a contentious second arena in Manchester (albeit facing a “chaotic” opening in April 2024),²⁶ and the same company has proposed a further venue, promised to be “the greatest venue in the world”, in West London.²⁷

11. Many participants at our roundtables also argued that the closures crisis would diminish opportunities for new starters in the sector, given that the grassroots circuits are where many technicians cut their teeth. As one participant in Manchester noted, “Taylor Swift’s lighting director didn’t start out as Taylor Swift’s lighting director”. However, others noted that it was becoming more difficult to train new staff, both because “the best get snapped up by big venues or arena tours quicker than is viable to spend on training them” and because there are fewer available work hours to commit to training in efforts to manage staff costs.

12. Alongside live music, clubs and venues for electronic music are also suffering. Between 2021 and 2023, the number of nightclubs, which host and are integral to the success of electronic music, has fallen by 30% from 1,035 to 851, part of a wider decline of over 70% from more than 3,000 spaces in 2005.²⁸ The Night Time Industries Association speculated that “DJ and artist programming in music-led clubs will become ever more difficult due to competition for artists from festivals and global events prepared to pay higher fees”.²⁹

13. GMVs, festivals and electronic music spaces and clubs are facing both demand-side and supply-side issues. On the one hand, audiences are cutting back on expenditure due to the economic climate and there is evidence of long-term behavioural shifts among

23 [Q2; Association of Independent Festivals \(GMV0007\)](#)

24 [Q4](#)

25 It should be noted that the Co-operative Group is the sponsor of the venue; the arena itself is a joint venture between the Oak View Group, an American sports, live entertainment and commercial real estate company, and City Football Group, the holding company that owns and administers several football clubs across the world, including its flagship club Manchester City FC.

26 [“Co-op Live, Manchester’s £365m new arena, opens with big capacity and plans”](#), BBC News, 21 April 2024; [“Head of Co-op Live arena quits amid opening week chaos”](#), The Guardian, 26 April 2024

27 [“West London could soon get a massive new live music venue”](#), TimeOut, 28 April 2024

28 Night Time Industries Association, [Night Time Economy Report 2024](#) (29 February 2024)

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 27–8

younger demographics in how, when and if they purchase tickets, food and alcohol.³⁰ One venue told us that, pre-Covid, average spend was about £29 per head on drinks; this has fallen to £12 per head in recent years.³¹ The same venue also said that that different genres attracted audiences with different levels of spending, which created financial disincentives to maintain a diverse music programme. What makes these trends concerning is that, for GMVs at least, only approximately 30% of income is generated from ticket sales for music and non-music events; the remaining 70% comes from food and beverages and other sources.³²

14. At the same time supply chain, energy, staffing and other business costs have spiralled. Rent alone has increased by 37.5% for GMVs with landlords—almost 90% of the sector—while renowned London nightclub Heaven is currently facing closure following a rent increase of £320,000.³³ Anecdotal and quantitative evidence shows that increases to ticket and drink prices, while challenging for consumers, have not come close to offsetting these rising costs.³⁴ Meanwhile, we heard that venues have faced significant pressure to continue to invest more and more in marketing budgets just to maintain existing audiences.³⁵

Artists, songwriters and artists businesses

15. Performing artists are facing a “cost-of-touring crisis”, reducing the number who are out to tour across the UK and abroad by as much as 74% compared to pre-pandemic numbers.³⁶ The loss of venues and increased costs of touring means that the tours of 30 years ago visiting towns and cities across the country are more difficult to replicate today; many artists are focusing on cities such as Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and London, which means venues in other areas having to rely solely on “hyper-local” talent.³⁷ David Martin, chief executive of the Featured Artists’ Coalition (FAC), told us that 62% of applications for FAC’s ‘Step Up Fund’, which provides financial support for up-and-coming artists in partnership with Amazon Music, were for domestic live touring support.³⁸ Mr Martin noted that while historically it was difficult to get recorded music to market, now with digitisation and the cost of touring it was live performances and touring that were becoming harder.³⁹ Mark Davyd, chief executive of the Music Venue Trust, observed that the grassroots helped develop artists’ music, stage presence and audiences:

We are over-run with people who have had a hit on TikTok and are now desperately trying to build the grassroots audience that will give them a sustainable career. It is a big thing in our sector for people to now be going out on tour, having jumped forward and then realised, “Wait a minute, I don’t have the deep connection with my fans that I get from being in a room with 250 other people”.⁴⁰

30 Music Managers Forum (MMF), Featured Artists Coalition (FAC) ([GMV0002](#)); see also [Qq10–12](#); [LIVE, A New Normal? Deep dive into audience trends](#) (7 December 2023)

31 Roundtable participant in Manchester

32 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2023](#) (23 January 2024), p. 11

33 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2022](#) (23 January 2023), p.9–11 and Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 11

34 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2023](#) (23 January 2024), p. 11

35 Roundtable participants in Manchester and London

36 [Qq2–3](#), 88

37 [Qq43–44](#)

38 [Q85](#)

39 [Q82](#)

40 [Qq39–40](#)

16. Witnesses to our inquiry discussed how this crisis might affect different genres, due to a range of factors. Lily Fontaine from the band English Teacher, for example, told us that “in the guitar indie sphere that I operate in, the venues and grassroots music scene is the reason why it operates; it would be non-existent without it because the type of music that is created within that sphere is fuelled by local communities”.⁴¹ Kwame Kwaten, vice-chair of the Music Managers Forum (MMF), added that grime, drill and hip-hop “definitely suffer”.⁴² David Martin said that “counter-cultural movements come from the grassroots, they come from the underground, and musically they have made the UK the envy of the world”.⁴³

17. Given that artists are collectively the sector’s biggest employers, the crisis also has a ripple-out effect on the professionals who rely on artists to make their own livelihoods, such as tour managers and technicians, and business partners such as managers and agents, who do not get paid if a tour does not make money.⁴⁴ Independent and grassroots promoters and programmers have fewer opportunities to put on shows and are less willing and able to take risks.⁴⁵ The loss of performances has also impacted songwriter royalties, constraining the earning ability of those who write the lyrics and compositions of songs alongside those who perform them.⁴⁶

18. In response to calls to address this crisis, the Government has pointed to two initiatives: £500,000 in Arts Council England (ACE) funding that is helping Music Venue Trust (MVT) acquire the freehold of some at-risk venues; and the ACE-administered Supporting Grassroots Music Fund to provide £4 million per year to venues, festivals rehearsal and recording spaces, electronic music venues and independent promoters across two years.⁴⁷ However, ACE’s submission to our inquiry recognised that “our investment cannot resolve all these challenges” despite its commitment “to ensuring that GMVs and promoters remain confident that Arts Council funding is open to them”.⁴⁸

19. The crisis affecting grassroots music venues and the broader live music ecosystem, including artists, promoters and festivals, is of deep concern to music lovers, local communities and all those who depend on the sector’s economic and cultural success. We also recognise and share concerns that these issues are affecting the broader night-time venues that host music, including clubs and electronic music spaces. These sectors must not be allowed to continue to decline, but the current support is insufficient to prevent this.

A ‘Fan-Led Review of Music’

20. The continued rate of grassroot venue closures has expedited our inquiry; urgent action is required. However, as we have highlighted, live music is supported by an entire ecosystem of professionals, many of whom are under extraordinary strain to remain viable in the current climate. The complexity of this ecosystem and the breadth of issues faced by its professionals goes beyond the terms of our inquiry into GMVs.

41 [Q79](#)

42 [Qq79–82](#)

43 [Q82](#)

44 [Qq87–88](#); Music Managers Forum (MMF), Featured Artists Coalition (FAC) ([GMV0002](#))

45 [Qq41–2, 44–5](#)

46 [Q43](#)

47 HC Deb, 18 April 2024, [cols 430–435](#)

48 Arts Council England ([GMV0005](#)) para 3.2

21. There is precedent for comprehensive reviews in other culture, media and sport sectors. In April 2021, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched an independent *Fan-Led Review of Football Governance*, chaired by Dame Tracey Crouch MP, in response to “three points of crisis in the national game”: the collapse of Bury FC in 2018–19; the existential threat of pandemic and its effects to many professional clubs; and the pernicious attempt to set up a so-called “European Super League” involving six top-flight English clubs in 2021.⁴⁹ The Fan-Led Review, published in November 2021, made recommendations including options for new corporate governance, financial regulation and supporter engagement.⁵⁰ The Government aims to deliver several of the recommendations of the Fan-Led Review regarding the men’s professional game through its Football Governance Bill, which received its Second Reading in the House of Commons on 23 April 2024.⁵¹

22. The breadth of the live music ecosystem necessitates a similar in-depth review. The success of the fan-led review of football and the impetus this has given for changes to the sport demonstrates the value of any such review engaging with live music fans. Without consumers of music, there is neither reason nor chance for the live music sector to continue to exist. Jon Collins, chief executive of LIVE, and Mark Davyd, chief executive of MVT, noted that fans “are central” to the industry’s success but are also “massively under-represented”, particularly at the local community level.⁵²

23. While our work has focused on immediate solutions to support grassroots music, a comprehensive review of the live music ecosystem is needed to fully explore the long-term challenges and the interventions needed to protect it. We recommend that the Government launch a fan-led review of live and electronic music in the summer of 2024, to bring together all parts of the ecosystem and report within the next twelve months.

49 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, [Fan-Led Review of Football Governance](#) (24 November 2021), p. 12

50 *Ibid.*

51 [“Historic Football Governance Bill introduced in Parliament”](#), Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 18 March 2024

52 [Q23](#)

3 A live music levy

24. The average grassroots music venue (GMV) has a profit margin of just 0.5%, equivalent to less than £3,000 per year, though this average obscures the fact that venues based in communities with populations of less than 200,000 people made an average loss of -2.55%.⁵³ Roundtable participants told us about initiatives they had taken to reduce costs, such as by closing ancillary operations (e.g., restaurant areas) and reducing or cutting maintenance work and admin, security and bar roles (with managers often double-hatting to make up the slack); however, the overwhelming consensus was that GMVs had reached the limit of what could be cut without divesting from music provision or closing entirely. As such, there were consistent calls for urgent and additional industry-led and government support for the sector.

Calls for financial contributions to grassroots music

25. Our roundtables highlighted challenges specific to grassroots music venues in comparison to larger music venues. Common concerns included:

- A lack of systematic private philanthropy and investment (“we don’t get a lot of people sponsoring 100-[capacity] venues”), though representatives were grateful for and did not diminish the importance of voluntary support from regular patrons;
- Increased competition from arenas in city centres and from sports stadiums, who in turn invest revenues into sporting operations, including sporting grassroots rather than music grassroots;
- Frustrations against arena operators charging “restoration levies” and other additional fees on tickets, rather than in support of the GMV ecosystem.

26. Participants coalesced around the need for a fund that would support GMVs using contributions from bigger players in the sector. Support for a contribution mechanism was shared in written contributions from independent not-for-profit membership body Creative UK and music industry umbrella body UK Music.⁵⁴ Mark Davyd, chief executive of the Music Venue Trust, told us that “we need to find a way to really fast track [financial support] so we stop losing venues; honestly, there is plenty of money available”.⁵⁵ Creative UK argued that such a proposal would “strongly benefit the talent pipeline and the wider music industry, which will in turn enhance the UK’s ability to use our music sector as a soft power tool”.⁵⁶ The Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) said it could “see the merits in a levy”, and noted that Music Venue Trust (MVT) proposed applying it to venues above 5,500 capacity, excluding festivals.⁵⁷

53 Music Venue Trust, *Annual Report 2023* (23 January 2024), p. 11

54 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 15; UK Music ([GMV0006](#))

55 *Ibid.*, Q255

56 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#))

57 Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))

27. When asked about a ticket levy, DCMS has previously stated that “[i]ndustry-led discussions are ongoing regarding increased support for grassroots music venues from larger events and venues, and DCMS actively supports these sector-led initiatives”.⁵⁸ Most recently, it said that it was “very sympathetic to that concept, which has worked well in football”.⁵⁹ In the Scottish Parliament, a levy was supported by then-Shadow Culture Secretary Donald Cameron (since appointed to the UK Government).⁶⁰

28. We asked live music stakeholders about a levy, including different models for it, during our inquiry. Collectively, our witnesses accepted the scale of the crisis in the sector—and there was a broad consensus that a solution was needed, despite disagreements about the form it should take.⁶¹ Unsurprisingly, dispute over the principles and practicalities of a levy primarily pertained to where the financial burden would fall and how it would be managed, including:

- whether contributions to a fund should be ad hoc, voluntary or compulsory;
- who should collect, manage, take decisions on and distribute the resulting fund, and who should be able to access it; and
- whether it should be included within the ticket’s price or as an additional fee on top of the face value of the ticket.

Levy contribution process

Voluntary approaches: ad hoc and sector-wide

29. MVT and venue representatives at our roundtables called for a £1 levy on arena and stadium tickets to provide industry-led philanthropy and support.⁶² Mark Davyd told us that £1 per ticket would raise “significant funds” and “would probably be the most significant change to our grassroots venues in the seven decades they have been open”, providing “a sustainable ecosystem at that level that effectively would then create a sustainable ecosystem for everybody else”.⁶³ Mr Davyd suggested that a voluntary levy was within the gift of the industry:

It is incredibly easy to do £1 on every ticket at arena and stadium level; we have done it multiple times for different reasons. Everybody consented to it in order to sustain the profitability or sustainability of our arenas, the tour, or the promoters.

While such a scheme could be statutory, Mark Davyd claimed that a voluntary scheme could be agreed to quickly and straightforwardly if general consensus could be reached across the industry.⁶⁴

58 [PQ 17368](#) [on music venues: finance], 13 March 2024; [PQ 17369](#) [on music venues: finance], 13 March 2024; [PQ 17370](#) [on music venues: finance], 13 March 2024

59 HC Deb, 18 April 2024, [col 434](#) [Commons Chamber]

60 “*Scotland to consider £1 music ticket levy*”, Arts Professional, 19 December 2023

61 [Qq14–28, 47–52, 69–70, 86, 89, 95–8](#); see also: Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)); UK Music ([GMV0006](#)); Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))

62 See, for example: [Qq14–15, 21, 26, 28](#)

63 [Q26](#)

64 [Q21](#)

30. Stuart Galbraith, vice-chair of the Concert Promoters Association (CPA) and chief executive of UK event promoter Kilimanjaro Live, though initially sceptical of the efficiencies of sector-wide levies (see Paragraphs 70–73), similarly noted that the majority of the UK live sector, being predominantly British-based, British-managed and representing British talent, would have the capability to support some form of initiative.⁶⁵

31. While National Arenas Association (NAA) celebrated the importance of the grassroots, acknowledged the crisis affecting GMVs and told us that an industry-led solution was feasible, it was resistant to a broad-brush levy on ticket prices.⁶⁶ Gary Roden, then-executive director and general manager of the NAA's newest member, Co-op Live in Manchester,⁶⁷ criticised the idea of a £1 levy as “too simplistic”, citing the lack of a robust system for distribution and suggesting some GMVs are “poorly run”.⁶⁸ Mr Roden subsequently resigned from Co-op Live following successive delays to the opening of the arena and report of “chaos” at the arena.⁶⁹

32. John Drury, chair of the NAA and vice-president and general manager of OVO Arena Wembley, told us that “apart from the VAT cut [...], the favoured option among NAA members is what has become known as the ‘Enter Shikari model’”.⁷⁰ This model refers to the initiative of electronicore/post-hardcore band Enter Shikari to donate £1 from every ticket sale for their 2024 arena tour to support GMVs.⁷¹ ASM Global, a venue and event management company, subsequently matched Enter Shikari's contribution for the performance at their OVO Arena Wembley and reportedly made further fundraising efforts for Enter Shikari tickets for its other venues, including AO Arena in Manchester and first direct Arena in Leeds, to provide donations, training and marketing support for GMV operators.⁷² Explaining his decision to contribute, Mr Drury told us that “we thought it was the right thing to do because it was the first time a band had come to OVO Arena Wembley with the mindset of, ‘we are going to donate this money to the MVT; we are already close to the MVT and have an ongoing relationship,’ and I wanted to say, ‘this is a gesture from our side’”.⁷³

33. Creative UK highlighted other ad hoc initiatives, including Halifax-based The Piece Hall becoming the first venue to give ticket-buyers the option to donate to the Music Venue Trust, and Swansea Arena launching a partnership with the Trust to raise £20,000 for GMVs.⁷⁴

34. John Drury raised two objections to a sector-wide approach: the burden on arenas and the burden on paying consumers.⁷⁵ On the impact to arenas specifically, he told us that:

65 [Q52](#)

66 [Qq4, 18–20, 24, 26, 39–40](#)

67 As noted above, the arena is a joint venture between the entertainment company Oak View Group and City Football Group, the holding company that owns and administers Manchester City and several other clubs worldwide.

68 [“Manchester Co-Op Live Arena boss resigns after rows, controversy and venue problems”](#), NME, 25 April 2024

69 [“Co-op Live, Manchester's £365m new arena, opens with big capacity and plans”](#), BBC News, 21 April 2024;

[“Head of Co-op Live arena quits amid opening week chaos”](#), The Guardian, 26 April 2024

70 [Q20](#)

71 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 15.2; see also: [“Enter Shikari donate tour funds to small venues”](#), BBC News, 3 May 2023; [Q20](#)

72 [“Arena operator pledges support to grassroots music venues”](#), Arts Professional, 22 June 2023

73 [Q20](#)

74 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 15.3

75 [Qq18–19, 24, 26 \[John Drury\]](#)

Given many of our venues are managed on behalf of private landlords, city councils and charitable trusts, the impact of £1 a ticket would be approximately a 20% cut in our [earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation]. It is not a few grains of sand; it is quite significant.⁷⁶

He further added that this would affect the range of NAA members differently:

[Arenas] might look like the cash cow with the range of venues we have in the NAA; one or two might be but a lot are not. If we have 24 members in the NAA, how many can you think of that regularly play big arena tours? You probably would not come up with many that do.⁷⁷

However, evidence from Creative UK contrasted the grassroots crisis with the fact that “seven new arenas are being built, which will generate hundreds of millions a year”, and reflected on the levy burden by adding that “Electric Group—which owns large music venues in Brixton, Bristol, Sheffield and Newcastle—and entertainment giant Live Nation reported record profits in 2023”.⁷⁸

35. While not endorsing a compulsory levy, Jon Collins of LIVE queried whether a co-ordinated, sector-wide voluntary contribution of £1 per ticket would raise concerns from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the UK’s independent competition and consumer choice regulator.⁷⁹ While co-ordinated contributions could feasibly cause the CMA to have concerns, we expect that industry bodies would work carefully to ensure that the impact of the levy is not passed on to the consumer. Indeed, we believe a small levy could ultimately benefit consumers of live music by providing a choice of venues and acts and supporting the wider live music ecosystem.

36. By contrast, artists and managers raised several issues with a voluntary approach. Lily Fontaine, musician, songwriter and vocalist of English Teacher, said that “the compulsory model seems more appropriate” as “[t]rying to put this down to each individual artist could make that fund unsustainable because it would fluctuate depending on how much the artist knows about the levy”.⁸⁰ Kwame Kwaten, vice-chair of the Music Managers Forum (MMF), similarly supported a compulsory levy, asserting that “we all know if you give people the chance to back away from paying, sometimes they will take it; not everybody is as generous as Enter Shikari”.⁸¹ David Martin, chief executive of the Featured Artists Coalition (FAC), concurred, stating that “[a]s soon as it is voluntary, there is the opportunity to opt out, there is the opportunity to create an imbalance in the playing field”.⁸² Mr Martin expanded by arguing that the burden would instead fall on artists, rather than arenas, telling us that:

It cannot be a downward pressure on artists or a voluntary thing where you have some artists, potentially British artists, saying, yes, they are very happy with the levy, and then you have foreign artists coming to the UK saying they are not prepared to do that. It creates an uneven playing field.⁸³

76 [Q18](#)

77 [Q19](#)

78 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 8

79 [Q28](#)

80 [Q95](#)

81 [Q96](#)

82 [Q97](#)

83 [Q89](#)

The “French model”: a statutory approach

37. In France, a statutory 3.5% levy on the gross value of all concert tickets sales goes into a central fund administered by the Centre National de la Musique (CNM), France’s public agency supporting music creation, research and export.⁸⁴ Applications can be made to the fund to support “risk-taking” live music activity.⁸⁵ Mark Davyd of the MVT, who has also endorsed this model previously, described how the fund is administered in practice:

A venue will typically say, “Here is a programme of events that is important to the development of French artists or music. In six months of this programme, we will lose €40,000 to €50,000.” They draw it down from the fund. At the end, it is assessed as to how it performed economically, and they can make an application for the following six months or a year on the basis of the money they have lost. There is a similar operation for promoters. The French fund also supports artists to make albums, do recordings and rehearsals, and to help with production expenses.⁸⁶

In a joint written submission to the Committee, the FAC and MMF called for a levy that ensured as a matter of principle “that any fund is fairly contributed to by the biggest players and supports both the infrastructure, the audiences and the musicians without whom there is no music”.⁸⁷

38. The French system also means that international artists touring in France contribute to the fund and, therefore, the French grassroots.⁸⁸ Mark Davyd noted this while also calling for support for artists: “when British artists, promoted by British promoters, managed by a British manager, represented by a British agent, go with a British production company to the Stade de France, they pay a levy to support French musicians”.⁸⁹

39. Jon Collins, chief executive of LIVE, cautioned against straightforwardly taking examples from other jurisdictions, arguing that VAT on tickets in France is 5.5%, meaning that even with a 3.5% levy the marginal tax rate on tickets is less than half of that in the UK (see Paragraph 53).⁹⁰ However, Mark Davyd asserted that while overall the French grassroots music scheme was not as healthy as that of the UK, ultimately, “the French model works because no venues in France have closed”.⁹¹ The UK Government has said, in the context of its engagement with industry over solutions, it has “no current plans to mandate a ticket levy”.⁹²

40. We are encouraged that stakeholders across the sector are taking a levy seriously and already coming together to propose solutions in good faith. While we agree with artists and managers that a compulsory levy on arena and stadium tickets would be the fairest and most sustainable mechanism to support grassroots music venues without requiring downward pressures on artists’ share of revenues, we accept that the urgency

84 [“Platforms and record labels lobby to block French music streaming tax”](#), Le Monde, 24 October 2023

85 [Q14; Oral evidence](#) taken before the Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee on 10 October 2018, HC (2017–19) 733, Q255

86 [Qq14–5](#)

87 Music Managers Forum (MMF), Featured Artists Coalition (FAC) ([GMV0002](#))

88 [Q27](#)

89 *Ibid*

90 [Q22](#)

91 [Q15, Q22](#)

92 [PQ 17368](#) [on music venues: finance], 13 March 2024

of the crisis in grassroots means that a voluntary levy is the most feasible way to have an immediate impact. If the live music sector is serious about creating an effective voluntary levy, it must be equitable for all stakeholders and in place as soon as possible.

41. *We recommend that the live music industry introduce a voluntary levy on arena and stadium tickets no later than September 2024 to support grassroots music venues, artists and promoters.*

42. *We further recommend that the Government should undertake and publish an assessment of the effectiveness of the voluntary levy on grassroots music venues no later than 12 months after its establishment.*

43. *If a voluntary levy is unable to be agreed by September 2024, or if the assessment of the voluntary levy concludes it is not collecting the income required to support the GMV sector, the Government should introduce a statutory levy at the earliest subsequent opportunity.*

Levy mechanics

Access to the fund

44. While participants in our roundtables argued for a levy that primarily benefitted grassroots venues, representatives from stakeholder groups across the industry emphasised that any fund should be accessible to the entire grassroots music ecosystem. The FAC, MMF and the Association of Independent Promoters, as well as cross-sector body UK Music, asserted that artists (and by extension their business partners) and promoters should be able to benefit from the fund;⁹³ Mark Davyd, arguing that this accessibility was a strength of the French model and advocating for the same in the case of a voluntary fund, concurred, telling us that “my members will all tell you one of their biggest concerns is that artists cannot afford to tour and the length of tours we are seeing”.⁹⁴

Administering the fund

45. Several ways of administering the fund were put forward during our inquiry. There was widespread consensus from stakeholders that an industry-led approach was optimal. In France, the equivalent fund is collected and administered by the CNM. In the absence of a direct equivalent in the UK, the most straightforward option might be the Arts Council England (ACE), the arm’s-length body responsible for promoting and investing in arts and culture in England. However, there was consistent opposition to this from stakeholders across the live sector, from both our roundtables and evidence session, on the basis of the sector’s engagement with ACE to date and their administration of the Supporting Live Music Fund and Culture Recovery Fund specifically (discussed further in Chapter 4).⁹⁵ That said, David Martin did suggest that there was still a role for central government to play, arguing that, “[w]ith the right will, Government could really help the industry coalesce about how a levy would be collected and distributed”.⁹⁶

93 [Qq84–86](#); Music Managers Forum (MMF), Featured Artists Coalition (FAC) ([GMV0002](#)); Association of Independent Promoters ([GMV0008](#))

94 [Qq14–15](#)

95 [Qq22, 47, 49–50, 75–76, 88–89](#)

96 [Q89](#)

46. Jon Collins told us that his organisation intended to create a ‘LIVE Trust’, which would “be a charitable arm of our organisation, a receiving house for those funds, a focal point for those industry efforts to raise funds, and then push that money back out to the experts who know where it needs to be spent and avoid duplication, such as the MVT Pipeline Investment Fund, [MMF] Accelerator Programme and the FAC’s Step Up Fund”.⁹⁷ Stuart Galbraith described the LIVE Trust as “an optimum solution” and “the way forward”.⁹⁸

47. Discussing how the LIVE Trust would operate, Stuart Galbraith asserted that:

We know our industry best. The prospect of a charitable trust that has representatives upon it who know the industry inside out and knows how to get that money to the freelancers who, during Covid, got absolutely nothing from the Arts Council to the small promoters, to the bands, as well as the venue operators.⁹⁹

Mr Galbraith continued that these “key trustees” would represent each part of the sector, including artists, production companies, independent promoters and independent festivals, and would make decisions based “upon the merits of an application, where the money needs to go, rather than the money going to people who are best at filling in a Government form”.¹⁰⁰ Mark Davyd, meanwhile, noted that, in terms of distribution, “[MVT] are a charity and are already distributing quite significant funds to venues; we do not see a need for us to be replicated by a LIVE Trust or anybody else”.¹⁰¹

Pricing

48. During discussions about the potential models of levy, several stakeholders raised concerns about how any contribution would be applied at the point of sale. Stuart Galbraith explained that his initial opposition to a levy in principle were due to inefficiencies of levies “inside the ticket price”, which would be subject to tax, PRS fees, building rental, insurance and so on.¹⁰² However, Mr Galbraith later accepted that, given Enter Shikari’s donation of £1 per ticket (which was taken from gross revenues and included in the ticket price) was treated as a charitable donation and therefore not subject to deductions, it was acceptable.¹⁰³ David Martin raised a similar concern, arguing that any contribution inside the ticket would be negotiated out of the artists’ fees (and by extension managers, agents and other professionals paid on commission within artists’ businesses) rather than from venues’ and promoters’ fees.¹⁰⁴

49. It is unclear, however, how a contribution or levy added at the point of sale (i.e., “outside the ticket”) would intersect with the Government’s intention to prevent “drip pricing” practices, where consumers are shown an initial price for a product and additional fees are

97 [Q25](#). The MVT’s Pipeline Investment Fund provides grants of up to £5,000 to GMVs for small-scale capital projects and staff and training initiatives; the MMF’s Accelerator Programme provides managers with professional development through financial and educational support.

98 [Q49](#)

99 [Q49](#)

100 [Q50](#)

101 [Q26](#)

102 [Qq51, 69](#)

103 [Qq69–70](#)

104 [Qq97–98](#)

revealed as consumers proceed with a transaction.¹⁰⁵ Earlier this year, the Government announced that its legislation will prohibit presenting a headline price which does not incorporate in the price any fixed mandatory fees that must be paid by all consumers or disclose the existence of any variable mandatory fees and how they will be calculated.

50. There is broad consensus that a charitable organisation is best placed to administer the levy funds. While Arts Council England is already well-established and well-placed to distribute funding, we accept that a trust led by a sector umbrella body, such as the LIVE Trust or Music Venues Trust, is the best way to collect, manage and distribute a voluntary fund. *For this to succeed, we recommend that it contains broad representation for all stakeholders, including venues from GMVs to arenas, artists and their business partners and national and independent promoters among its trustees. A trust must provide the utmost transparency and due diligence for its decisions to ensure it can maintain the confidence of all stakeholders within the fragile live music ecosystem.*

105 Department for Business & Trade, [Government response to consultation on 'Smarter Regulation: Improving consumer price transparency and product information for consumers'](#), 24 January 2024. This will be legislated for as part of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Bill, which, at the time of publication is awaiting consideration of Lords amendments and is expected to receive Royal Assent later this year. [Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill](#), [Bill 198 (2023–24)]

4 VAT and business rate relief

Calls for VAT relief

51. VAT is added to the majority of products and services sold by VAT-registered businesses (businesses with turnover of greater than £90,000) in the UK; most goods and services are charged a standard rate of 20%, though some are eligible for a 5% reduced rate (such as home energy and children’s car seats) or zero rate (such as most food and children’s clothes).¹⁰⁶ As part of a package of support for the recovery of arts and culture during the pandemic, VAT on hospitality, including live music, was cut from 20% to 5% in July 2020 for an initial period of six months.¹⁰⁷ At the time, we recommended that “the cut in VAT on ticket sales for theatre and live music be extended beyond January 2021, for the next three years” to “combat the negative effects of closure and to stimulate long-term recovery” for the sector.¹⁰⁸

52. Although the 5% rate was extended twice (first to 31 April 2021 and then to 30 September 2021), it was increased to 12.5% from October 2021 and then back to the standard 20% rate in April 2022.¹⁰⁹ In an open letter to then-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak MP, in March 2022, then-chief executive of UK Music Jamie Njoku-Goodwin wrote:

Pushing up VAT to 20% would be hugely damaging for the music industry and leave music fans facing a cost-of-gigging crisis. The rise would come at a time when we are rebuilding post-Covid-19, with hundreds of concerts planned over the next few months. We would urge the Chancellor to give people who already face rising prices and grim headlines every day a little lift by ditching the ticket tax and abandoning the VAT hike.¹¹⁰

Benefits of VAT relief

53. Stakeholders across the live music sector, including the representatives of the brick-and-mortar venues, promoters and the Music Managers Forum (MMF), told us that a cut to VAT would incentivise greater activity in the sector.¹¹¹ Several venues at our roundtables asserted that reducing or relieving VAT on tickets would create more headroom for the venue to operate, particularly given demand-side constraints on increasing overall ticket prices to cover spiralling costs. LIVE chief executive Jon Collins noted that this was consistent with the Government’s strategic aims for the creative industries as one of five key areas for growth in the economy, given that “the two big barriers to us doing more are EU touring and 20% VAT on tickets”, and added that “for every 10,000 people who attend [a live music event], they would spend £1 million in the local economy”.¹¹² Creative UK explained that VAT on tickets in the rest of Europe was, on average, half of the UK

106 GOV.UK, ‘[How VAT works](#)’, accessed 15 April 2024

107 “[Coronavirus: hospitality VAT cut will apply to concerts and music festivals](#)”, The Guardian, 10 July 2020

108 Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, Third Report of Session 2019–21, [Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report](#), HC 291, para 63

109 “[VAT: End of ‘lifeline’ tax cut will hit hospitality sector](#)”, BBC News, 1 October 2021

110 “[UK Music Chief Urges Chancellor to use Mini-Budget to Ditch “Hugely Damaging” VAT Hike on Concert Tickets](#)”, UK Music press release, 15 March 2022

111 Qq10–13, 20, 22, 44–45, 67, 71–74, 91; Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 17; Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#)); Association of Independent Promoters ([GMV0008](#))

112 [Q13](#)

standard rate, while Association of Independent Promoters (AIP) co-chair Anna Moulson listed that “Belgium pays 6%, France 4.5%, Italy 10%, and Germany 7%”.¹¹³ Indeed, the UK has the third highest rate of VAT on concert ticketing in Europe, behind only Denmark and Lithuania.¹¹⁴ UK Music suggested that reducing VAT to the EU average of 10% would “incentivise investment in the grassroots of the sector, stimulate live music activity and boost local economies”.¹¹⁵ The Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) said that for a grassroots festival (i.e., an independent festival of up to 20,000 licenced capacity) a VAT reduction “would be a silver bullet”.¹¹⁶

54. Our inquiry explored whether a cut to VAT would be more effective than other interventions in promoting economic activity within the sector. Anna Moulson and Concert Promoters Association (CPA) vice-chair Stuart Galbraith explained that a VAT cut on tickets would materially change the risk profile of shows for promoters and in-house programmers when considering how likely a show was to break even.¹¹⁷ As Mr Galbraith explained:

The independent promoter, or in our case a national promoter that is working at a grassroots level, is effectively a risk-taker and banker for the process. We rent the venue; we pay the bands. If that model does not stack up, then the show does not happen, and if the show does not happen, then nobody makes money, and indeed, nobody has employment.¹¹⁸

Ms Moulson provided an illustrative example based on the costs of a gig in Brighton on the night of our evidence session:

Say the ticket price for a show, like I have on tonight in Brighton, is £10; the possibility of earning money is 100 x £10. The VAT is £200 out of that, and the cost is nearly £800. There is nothing left for the promoter.¹¹⁹

Mr Galbraith quantified the difference between the 20% and 5% VAT rate as “100 more shows that year as we came out of the pandemic”, while Ms Moulson added that some independent promoters “are now turning down grassroots shows in order that they can be below the threshold of having to be VAT-registered”.¹²⁰

55. Several stakeholders also suggested that VAT relief would increase the possibility of a ticket levy. Mark Davyd, chief executive of Music Venue Trust (MVT), told us that “if there was a VAT cut on tickets, it would give us the space to go to the leading figures in the music industry to say, ‘Listen, now is the time for you to reinvest that in the research and development happening in artists, promoters and venues at the grassroots level’”.¹²¹ National Arenas Association (NAA) chair John Drury, who told us that a VAT cut was preferable to a levy on arena tickets, concurred with Mr Davyd, adding that “as long as we knew it was going to the right places, any discount that could be taken back into the

113 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 17; [Q73](#)

114 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 14

115 UK Music ([GMV0006](#))

116 Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))

117 [Qq44–45](#)

118 [Q45](#); see also [Q71](#)

119 [Q44](#); see also: Association of Independent Promoters ([GMV0008](#)), which provides additional examples from recent live music events.

120 [Q67](#); see also: [Qq71, 73](#)

121 [Q11](#)

industry would be a good thing”.¹²² As noted in Chapter 2, Jon Collins highlighted to us that France’s rate of VAT on tickets meant that even with the 3.5% statutory levy on live music tickets, the marginal rate of tax on tickets in total was still half of that of the UK.¹²³

56. Reflecting on his experience also working across the theatre sector, Stuart Galbraith highlighted that alternative tax reliefs would not apply due to the esoteric mechanics of live music:

I confirmed six shows based on the fact that we were very certain we were going to get theatre tax relief. Without that tax relief, those shows would not have taken place. In the case of music, though, you cannot apply a tax relief scheme because the financial structure of our sector is not similar to theatre or film or orchestras: you do not have a producer principal, and there is no one entity that can apply for a tax relief scheme, because you have the promoter, you have the band and you have the venue; we are all separate VAT entities or tax entities.¹²⁴

Targeted relief

57. Stakeholders also argued that it would be appropriate to target VAT relief for music venues towards the grassroots sector.¹²⁵ John Drury told us that “a discount in the arena world is not necessarily needed, but to reroute that back into the [grassroots music venues (GMVs)] and MVT venues would be”.¹²⁶ Observing that the volume of smaller-capacity live music performances was significantly lower now than it was in 2022, Stuart Galbraith posited that targeted relief might involve a capacity threshold:

I would advocate that under a certain level, so under 1,000 capacity as an argument, everything has a beneficial VAT rate. That way you will stimulate live shows at that level, and you will see more shows play those venues. You will see those venues lose less money, and fewer will close.¹²⁷

58. Alternative targeting could be based on *London GMVs Rescue Plan*’s economic definition of GMVs, which described small (less than 350 capacity) and medium-sized (351–650 capacity) GMVs as having “little-if-any” to “limited” profit potential respectively.¹²⁸ Stuart Galbraith also mentioned that reducing VAT on alcohol sales and ancillary incomes for smaller venues could also positively impact venues given the direct reliance on such incomes to operate financially.¹²⁹ Given last year’s venue closures equated to a loss of as many as 30,000 shows (16% of GMV performance opportunities last year) and 4,000 jobs, not to mention the loss of tax revenues on ancillary services such as merchandise and alcohol, it is also reasonable to suppose that these closures would indirectly impact tax revenues.¹³⁰

122 [Q12](#)

123 [Q22](#)

124 [Q73](#)

125 [Q7](#)

126 [Q13](#)

127 [Qq71–72](#)

128 Mayor of London’s Music Venues Taskforce, [London’s Grassroots Music Venues Rescue Plan](#) (October 2015), pp. 36–7

129 [Qq73–74](#)

130 [Q1](#)

59. A targeted and temporary cut to VAT for grassroots music venues on tickets would help to improve the immediate risk-profile of live music for promoters and in-house programmers, who take on the financial risk, and help get more shows into venues. *The Government should introduce a temporary cut to VAT, based on venue capacity, to stimulate grassroots music activity and the wider economic benefits to local areas that grassroots music shows provide.*

60. We recognise that live music is one of many sectors calling for special treatment for VAT, and that the case for a long-term or permanent exemption requires a stronger evidence base for its economic impact than currently exists. *We recommend that the Treasury and DCMS undertake a comprehensive economic analysis of the impact on a cut to VAT in line with recommendations made in this report, including modelling: a cut to a 10% rate, which is the European average, on tickets, as well as alternative approaches such as VAT on food and beverages; a targeted intervention for different sizes of venue; and the indirect impacts to VAT revenues of venue closures and a reduction in live and electronic music events.*

The business rates relief extension

61. Business rates are the tax charged by local authorities on non-domestic properties, including music venues.¹³¹ Business rates were a key issue for GMVs during our predecessor committee’s *Live music* inquiry: the committee heard that many GMVs—at least one-third—had been negatively impacted by a business rate revaluation in 2017 and most of these had fallen outside a retail property exemption introduced in 2018 due to the value of the venues.¹³² Our predecessor committee recommended that “the Government should immediately review the impact of recent business rates changes on the live music sector and introduce new, or extend existing, relief schemes, such as those for pubs or small retail properties, to lessen the burden of business rates on music venues”.¹³³

62. In January 2020 the then-Chancellor, Sajid Javid MP, introduced a special business rates relief of 50% for GMVs;¹³⁴ GMVs are now eligible for ‘retail, hospitality and leisure relief’, introduced in March 2020 to supersede the original 50% cut, which equates to 75% up to £110,000. The relief was due to end at the end of the 2023–24 billing year, but in November 2023 it was extended until the end of the 2024–25 billing year.¹³⁵

63. The retail, hospitality and leisure relief has been welcomed by the grassroots music sector, but both Mark Davyd and Jon Collins were critical when asked about how the Treasury had handled the most recent extension to business rate relief. Mr Davyd told us that venue operators had responded to the 2024 rate relief cliff-edge “with panic”¹³⁶ and warned that the removal of the relief in 2025 would increase costs to the sector by £15 million.¹³⁷ Mr Collins added that “we need to know these things in advance, [...] do not

131 Business rates are calculated by functions based on an estimate of the open market rental value of the property from 1 April 2021 (called the “rateable value”). Some businesses are eligible for a reduction in their business rates bill, called ‘business rates relief’.

132 Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2017–19, *Live music*, HC 733, paras 67–71

133 *Ibid.*, para 71

134 “*Government Slashes Business Rates For Grassroots Music Venues*”, Music Venue Trust press release, 26 January 2020

135 GOV.UK, ‘*Business Rates Relief: 2024/25 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme*’, accessed 5 March 2024

136 [Q8](#)

137 [Q5](#); Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 12

keep us waiting until the last moment”; he called on Government to “tell us now if it is going to be extended for three years so the businesses can factor it into their planning”.¹³⁸ Both Mr Davyd and Mr Collins called for relief to be made permanent.¹³⁹

64. We welcome the Government’s decision to extend business rates relief for grassroots music venues until the end of the 24/25 billing year. However, while we understand that the conventions around Budget announcements are well-established, this continued uncertainty creates a new cliff-edge for the already precarious grassroots music sector. We recommend that Government should ensure that any future fiscal policy decisions relating to grassroots music venues gives venues certainty and long-term security. If the Treasury intends to end business rates relief for GMVs, the reduction in relief should be tapered in order to avoid an immediate shock to the sector.

138 [Q13](#)

139 [Qq8, 13](#)

5 Public funding

Existing public funding programmes

65. Our predecessor committee’s 2018–19 *Live music* inquiry considered the role of policymaking and public funding for the grassroots music ecosystem in detail, taking evidence from industry stakeholders, trade associations, Arts Council England (ACE) and central government.¹⁴⁰ The committee’s report identified an “unsurprising [...] history of under-engagement with Government and funding bodies, given the staffing constraints many venues face and the low rates of support for grassroots venues in Arts Council England’s flagship funding programme”.¹⁴¹ It specifically recommended that, “in its next ten-year strategy, the Arts Council makes explicit how it plans to redress the balance in funding for grassroots venues and contemporary music”.¹⁴²

66. As set out in its submission to this inquiry, ACE subsequently expanded its engagement with the sector in its existing funding programmes and launched several others:

- The 2019–23 Supporting Grassroots Live Music (SGLM) Fund, which dedicated at least £1.5 million per year in ringfenced funding and in total invested £9.9 million in over 470 projects over the four-year period;¹⁴³
- £445 million per year investment in the National Portfolio, ACE’s primary, multi-year investment programme, which is supporting 985 National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) for the 2023–26 period, including 139 organisations from across the music industry, such as record labels, orchestras, trade bodies, festivals, development initiatives and venues;¹⁴⁴
- £76 million per year investment in Music Education Hubs, local partnerships that support, deliver and enable access to music education for children and young people, on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE);
- £14.4 million per year in one-off grants for creative and cultural practitioners, including several musicians, through the Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) Programme; and
- £41.4 million in Culture Recovery Fund grants, which supported grassroots music venues (GMVs) through the pandemic.¹⁴⁵

67. Earlier this year, the SGLM Fund was superseded by the Supporting Grassroots Music (SGM) Fund, following an additional £5 million investment from DCMS over the next two years as part of its Creative Industries Sector Vision.¹⁴⁶ Through the SGM Fund,

140 Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2017–19, [Live music](#), HC 733, paras 83–91

141 *Ibid.*, para 91

142 *Ibid.*

143 Arts Council England, ‘[Supporting grassroots music](#)’, accessed 16 April 2024

144 Arts Council England, ‘[2023–26 Investment Programme](#)’, accessed 16 April 2024

145 Arts Council England ([GMV0005](#))

146 Department for Culture, Media & Sport, *Creative Industries Sector Vision: a joint plan to drive growth, build talent and develop skills*, [CP 863](#), 14 June 2023. The Sector Vision also provides a further £3.2 million additional Government funding for the Music Export Growth Scheme (MEGS), a joint-funded Government and industry-backed fund that makes grants available to small and medium-sized independent music companies to support artists’ careers in overseas markets.

ACE announced that it would be investing £4 million per year for grants of up to £40,000, and widened the fund’s scope to include electronic music venues, festivals, recording and rehearsal spaces and promoters alongside GMVs.¹⁴⁷

68. Local government has historically been, and remains, the biggest collective investors in culture across the country, as highlighted in our *Reimagining where we live: Cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda* report.¹⁴⁸ Councils across England spend over £1 billion on cultural services alone, including live music, and £2.4 billion on related services including wider leisure and green spaces.¹⁴⁹ Councils also have a role in licensing, planning, policymaking and stakeholder convening; UK Music have produced a toolkit to help embed music within local strategies.¹⁵⁰

69. However, as the Local Government Authority (LGA) notes, local authorities are facing significant funding pressures, with spend having reduced by 40% in the ten years preceding the pandemic.¹⁵¹ Although the UK Government is providing £600 million additional funding for the 2024–25 financial year, many local authorities told the LGA that cost savings would have to fall on sport and leisure services (55%), parks and green spaces (48%) and/or museums, galleries and theatres (34%).¹⁵² Despite this, there have been positive initiatives at a local level. The Liverpool City Region Music Board, for example, has legislated for and introduced a new N1 Night Bus on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, priced at £2 per single fare, to enhance music venue footfall and provide safe late-night transport options for fans and staff.¹⁵³ These initiatives could be replicated in other metropolitan areas in support of the sector.

Availability of public funding

70. The diminishing funding from local authorities has put increasing pressure on funding from ACE. Roundtable participants and industry stakeholders queried whether public funding would be readily available to those most in need. Indeed, the performance of ACE was a primary reason why a statutory levy based on the French model (see Paragraphs 37–39) was opposed by Concert Promoters’ Association (CPA) vice-chair Stuart Galbraith.¹⁵⁴ Strikingly, there was little dissent against this view beyond some broad sentiments of support for ACE’s work in general and for the expansion of the SGM Fund.¹⁵⁵

71. There were two main critiques regarding the availability of funding. First, stakeholders questioned whether the level of public funding would be sufficient to meet the needs of the sector.¹⁵⁶ Participants at our roundtables highlighted that grants were for one-off projects rather than for running costs, despite the latter being the urgent issue for GMVs, and raised concerns that that what funding available was also stretched too thin to be worthwhile. One participant summarised this perception by saying, “ballet, opera and

147 Arts Council England (GMV0005)

148 Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, Third Report of Session 2022–23, *Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda*, HC 155, paras 21–24

149 Local Government Association (LGA) (GMV0003) para 3.1

150 *Ibid.*, paras 3.2–3

151 *Ibid.*, para 4.7

152 *Ibid.*, para 4

153 “*Return of the Night Bus: Improving nightlife accessibility in our City Region*”, Liverpool City Region Music Board press release, 7 December 2023; see also: Local Government Association (LGA) (GMV0003)

154 Qq47, 49

155 Qq5, 75, 89

156 Qq5–6, 22, 88

classical music get over 80% of it”.¹⁵⁷ David Martin of the Featured Artists’ Coalition (FAC) warned that, “we do not fund the arts fantastically well in this country” and that “looking at the expenditure from Arts Council England, for example, not enough of it goes to commercial music”.¹⁵⁸ Discussing the SGM Fund specifically, Music Venue Trust (MVT)’s chief executive Mark Davyd told us that the additional funding made available to ACE by DCMS was insufficient to offset the widening of access to it for promoters, festivals, recording and rehearsal spaces and electronic music venues, arguing that “unfortunately, the demand far outstrips the supply”.¹⁵⁹ When our Chair raised the matter of the SGM Fund with Minister of State Julia Lopez MP in January, the Minister responded that “ahead of the Budget, we will be discussing all these matters with the Treasury”, but no more funding was subsequently forthcoming in the March 2024 budget.¹⁶⁰

72. Second, in addition to the level of public funding, stakeholders also criticised its accessibility. Venue operators at our roundtables, as well as representatives for promoters and artists, asserted that it was burdensome to apply for ACE funding, particularly given that most in the sector lack the time and expertise to make applications.¹⁶¹ Roundtable participants cited a myriad of reasons, ranging from perceptions that “it’s a lot of work just to be told no”, “we don’t understand grant-speak” and “it’s like learning another language”, that ACE “don’t give helpful feedback” and that decisions were “arbitrary” based on experiences of success and failure.¹⁶² As Anna Moulson of the Association of Independent Promoters (AIP), explained, “although the application has become easier, it still has a way to go in terms of us being able to access it, because it is 50 odd pages long, you have to use a certain type of language, you have to be informed and experienced enough to fill it out and there is a lot of reporting”.¹⁶³ Ms Moulson contrasted ACE’s processes negatively to other sources of funding her business applied for during the pandemic, such as local councils, which were “a few pages long”.¹⁶⁴

73. Several witnesses also noted that much of the ecosystem had missed out on support over the pandemic. David Martin highlighted that over the past four years, interventions such as business rates relief, the Culture Recovery Fund, furlough, local authority grants and the SGM Fund were all not available to artists.¹⁶⁵ Kwame Kwaten of the MMF added that these were therefore also unavailable to managers.¹⁶⁶ Stuart Galbraith similarly noted that, during the pandemic, freelancers “got absolutely nothing from the Arts Council”, nor did “small promoters, bands and venue operators”.¹⁶⁷

74. For its part, ACE’s submission noted that “[s]ince the [Supporting Grassroots Music] Fund launched in November 2023, we have already seen a 94.40% success rate for applications from music venues, 100% for rehearsal studios, 66.70% for promoters, 66.70% for recording studios and 53% for festivals”.¹⁶⁸ However, these success rates do

157 Roundtable participant in Manchester

158 [Q88](#)

159 [Qq5–6](#)

160 HC Deb, 11 January 2024, [col 423](#) [Commons Chamber]

161 [Qq75–76](#) [Anna Moulson], [88–89](#) [David Martin]; Association of Independent Promoters ([GMV0008](#)); roundtable participants in Manchester and London

162 Roundtable participants in Manchester and London

163 [Q75](#); see also Association of Independent Promoters ([GMV0008](#))

164 [Q76](#)

165 [Q84](#)

166 *Ibid.*

167 [Q49](#)

168 Arts Council England ([GMV0005](#)) para 2.25

not account for potential applicants put off because of their perceptions of the likelihood of success. Indeed, one participant at our roundtables said that the “trauma” of applying for support during Covid (which a number of participants did say that they received) put them off doing so again.¹⁶⁹ ACE asserted that “we are committed to ensuring that GMVs and promoters remain confident that Arts Council funding is open to them” and affirmed that it will “continue to monitor application numbers and success rates from the grassroots live music sector to our [...] Supporting Grassroots Music Fund and identifying where we should prioritise advice giving and support in relation to geography and underrepresented groups”.¹⁷⁰

75. We welcome the efforts by Arts Council England to address issues resulting from the live music sector’s ability to access public funding raised in our predecessor committee’s ‘Live music’ inquiry six years ago, and indeed grassroots music venues said that ACE funding through Covid had been a lifeline. However, we are concerned that perceptions and administrative burdens remain largely the same. We recommend that the Government and Arts Council work to reduce the administrative burden of applying for public funding.

169 Roundtable participant in London

170 Arts Council England ([GMV0005](#)) paras 3.2–4

6 Stakeholder disputes

Licensing live music

76. In order to stage live music events such as concerts or festivals, businesses including grassroots music venues (GMVs) must obtain a licence.¹⁷¹ As we have discussed in our work on *Music streaming*, copyright in the music industry is complex.¹⁷² In the case of live music, licensing provides venues with the necessary legal permissions from the copyright holders—the songwriters and composers who write the lyrics and musical compositions and the music publishers who help them promote and monetise these works—for the use of songs that are performed.¹⁷³

77. The licence required for playing and performing music in public is TheMusicLicence, obtained from PPL PRS Ltd.¹⁷⁴ PPL PRS is a joint venture between PRS for Music and PPL, collective management organisations (CMOs) which license the copyright works, enforce and administer the rights and collect royalties on behalf of their members, to streamline public performance licensing activities for customers.¹⁷⁵ PRS for Music is the CMO for songwriters, composers and music publishers; PPL is the CMO for artists and record labels. The cost of a licence depends on factors including the type of venue and how music is used; tariffs are set separately and independently by PPL and PRS for Music accounting for these factors.¹⁷⁶

78. The relevant tariff for live music venues is Tariff Live Popular (LP), set by PRS for Music to license 42 million works in its repertoire on behalf of its 175,000 UK members (and its broader global membership).¹⁷⁷ The rate of Tariff LP for venues is set at either 4% of revenue from gross receipts per event or 4.2% where a venue has opted not to declare other charges (such as booking fees).¹⁷⁸ The tariff explicitly excludes other revenues, such as food and drink or cloakroom revenues.¹⁷⁹ Data from the Music Venue Trust (MVT) has found that Tariff LP costs 1.2% of the total turnover of each venue on average.¹⁸⁰ Festivals, which are also covered by Tariff LP, can qualify for a rate of 2.5% if they meet the “Qualifying Festivals” criteria, in recognition of the wide array of programming, additional amenities and costs of the temporary infrastructure.¹⁸¹

79. As PRS’s submission to this inquiry explains, Tariff LP’s terms were agreed following public consultation and negotiation with industry bodies, including the MVT, Concert

171 GOV.UK, ‘[Get a licence to play live or recorded music](#)’, accessed 18 April 2024

172 See: Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, Second Report of Session 2021–22, [Economics of music streaming](#), HC 50, paras 24–33

173 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#))

174 PPL PRS Ltd, ‘[What is TheMusicLicence?](#)’, accessed 18 April 2024

175 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#))

176 PPL PRS Ltd, ‘[What is TheMusicLicence?](#)’, accessed 18 April 2024

177 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#))

178 Ibid.

179 [Q55](#)

180 [Q30](#); see also: Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2023](#) (23 January 2024), p. 11

181 Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))

Promoters Association (CPA) and National Arenas Association (NAA), and then ratified by the Copyright Tribunal in 2018.¹⁸² The tariff is reviewed periodically; the next review will begin in summer, and is expected to conclude by the end of Q2 2025.¹⁸³

PRS fees

80. In our roundtables, GMV operators told us that they believed licensing fees were not commensurate with the number of PRS-registered songs being performed in venues and that related processes were opaque. MVT’s Mark Davyd, for example, estimated that “over 50% of the music performed is not part of the catalogue of PRS”.¹⁸⁴ He also suggested that many royalties could not be distributed and ended up sitting in “black boxes” that were eventually reallocated to radio plays.¹⁸⁵ The Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) told us that they believed that the definition of “Qualifying Festivals” was too narrow and the proportional rise in production costs necessitated a reduction in rate in the next review.¹⁸⁶

81. Gavin Larkins, Director of Commercial Development and Sales at PRS for Music, did not recognise the 50% non-catalogue figure.¹⁸⁷ He told us that “in the grassroots sector there are many cover bands [...], a lot of tribute acts, so actually the amount of PRS repertoire that is being performed will likely be different to the number of performers who are PRS members”.¹⁸⁸ Mr Larkins also contested the term “black boxes” as “spurious” and “not something we use at PRS”, and distinguished between pots of unmatched royalties for streaming and live music, asserting that:

when a member submits their set list with the Set List Hub or the Gigs and Clubs Scheme, they are claiming from that pot. If a writer has not updated their payment details recently, and we owe them money, it is sitting in that pot. If we are waiting for works to be registered properly, it is in that pot.¹⁸⁹

82. PRS’s submission noted that it modified the terms of Tariff LP following consultation with the grassroots sector in the last tariff review effective from May 2018, reducing the minimum charge per event from £39 to £15 (since updated to £18 for inflation) and waiving the charge entirely where customers comply with reporting requirements.¹⁹⁰ PRS also listed other charitable initiatives, such as £2.5 million investment in talent development through the PRS Foundation, its sponsorship of the Glastonbury Emerging Talent Competition and support for venues through its 2022–23 Back to Live initiative.¹⁹¹

83. Several roundtable participants and other interlocutors argued that PRS for Music fees were duplicating performance fees paid to artists (and thus, at minimum, incurring unnecessary admin charges). However, PRS collects on behalf of the rightsholders for the lyrics and musical compositions (i.e., the songwriters and their music publishers)

182 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#)); [Qq57–59 \[Gavin Larkins\]](#). Industry umbrella body LIVE did not exist at the time of consultation.

183 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#)); [Q61](#)

184 [Q29](#)

185 [Q29](#)

186 Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))

187 [Q54](#)

188 [Qq54–55](#)

189 [Q60](#)

190 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#))

191 *Ibid.*

and thus those royalties are compensation for the public performance of those lyrics and compositions, which is specifically provided for in the copyright regime. These royalties may therefore go to performers or to others, depending on the provenance of songs performed—for example, a singer-songwriter performing only their own material would receive both performance fees (from the venue or promoter) and songwriting royalties (e.g., from PRS, assuming they are a member), but a tribute act would only receive performance fees while the original songwriters would receive the songwriting royalties.¹⁹² The rhetorical conflation of artists and songwriters in particular can create misunderstandings about how the law and therefore the fees/royalties apply in these instances, even when the artist and songwriter are the same person.¹⁹³

84. Mark Davyd and promoters Stuart Galbraith and Anna Moulson all proposed a new “Tariff GMV” or a form of tiering system based on gross revenue as exists in Ireland.¹⁹⁴ Representing artists, the Featured Artists’ Coalition (FAC)’s David Martin commented on black boxes generally, saying that “we do not think it is right that black box revenues flow to the largest rightsholders and the largest songwriters; we think it should go towards funding grassroots music and particularly grassroots touring”.¹⁹⁵ The AIF similarly said that its members “would like to see more transparency or reporting from PRS on the distribution of revenue paid by AIF festivals to copyright holders, and more clarity or equality when it comes to ‘black box’ distribution”.¹⁹⁶ Both Jon Collins and Gavin Larkins highlighted that the upcoming tariff review would be an opportunity to discuss proposals, with the latter saying that “the tariff review will be a comprehensive review, and anything that is brought to the table will be reviewed.”¹⁹⁷

Administrative burden

85. GMV operators taking part in our roundtables also told us that the administrative burden of PRS was too high. Licensees are required to provide: event set lists confirming the works performed, including the performer, title and original artist; the writer and duration of works used, wherever reasonably practical and proportionate; and full and accurate accounting of gross receipts on a category by category basis.¹⁹⁸ Mark Davyd summarised the GMV perspective thus: “they have to try to prove who owns all these rights, but they simply do not have access to the information and are effectively acting in an information-gathering exercise on behalf of PRS for Music”.¹⁹⁹ The Association of Independent Promoters (AIP) was similarly critical, arguing that “[r]eporting is not digitised, without a (public) register of who are members/clients, and whom they are legally allowed to collect for”,²⁰⁰ a characterisation echoed by several participants at our roundtables.²⁰¹

192 See, for instance, [Q67](#); also, [Q55](#); our *Music streaming* inquiry discusses song rightsholders’ remuneration in more detail across its reports.

193 [Oral evidence](#) taken on 12 December 2023, HC (2023–24) 156, Qq156, 161

194 [Qq31, 67](#)

195 [Q89](#)

196 Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))

197 [Qq33, 57, 59](#)

198 PRS for Music, ‘[Popular Music Concerts: Tariff ‘LP’](#)’, accessed 19 April 2024

199 [Q29](#)

200 Association of Independent Promoters ([GMV0008](#))

201 Roundtable participants in London

86. However, other stakeholders were more positive. While the AIF listed several areas of tension between their members and PRS, including “reporting of set lists, finding the appropriate rate for their event, or the impersonal nature by which PRS sometimes quote or collect”, they also described PRS as “open to learning more about the festival sector working with us and members on resolving problems”.²⁰² John Drury of the NAA, confirmed that PRS was not an issue for his members.²⁰³

87. PRS told us about a range of initiatives to reduce frictions, including dedicated customer support and direct dialogue with MVT’s regional managers.²⁰⁴ It also disputed the argument that it had not taken steps to digitise its business, stating that its approach “[allowed] for set lists to be submitted by either venues or PRS members, in whichever form best suits their needs, such as by taking a photo of a set list in a venue, sending information via email, sending paper copies by post, or via our digital tool, Set List Hub, which allows PRS members to conveniently submit set list information on the go using their mobile phone” and that it had invested in music recognition technology to “improve the accuracy and efficiency of data collection”.²⁰⁵ Gavin Larkins also asserted that PRS only litigated when faced with either persistent copyright infringement or non-payment, and in the latter instance would only litigate or threaten to “when we have exhausted all possible options to collaborate and to work with them through the relationship”.²⁰⁶

88. We recognise that, in the current economic context and amidst a closure crisis, there are frustrations among venue operators and promoters with PRS for Music’s fees and processes regarding licensing. We also recognise that PRS for Music has a responsibility to the songwriters, composers and music publishers it represents, and is a vital part of the music ecosystem. Songwriter rights and royalties should be protected but tariffs should be fair and terms reasonable for licensees.

89. The comprehensive Tariff Review, due to begin in summer 2024, is a useful opportunity to consider how concerns that have been raised with us, such as litigation, the ease of navigating processes and whether a GMV-specific tariff is feasible, can be mitigated or addressed for the next period. We recommend that our successor committee consider progress in the next Parliament.

Agent of change

90. The acute crisis of the financial sustainability of grassroots music is compounded by long-term operational and tenancy-related issues.²⁰⁷ Of the 148 GMVs lost last year, approximately 22% closed due to operational issues, such as revocation of premises licences or unachievable licence renewal terms, and approximately 12% closed due to eviction or redevelopment.²⁰⁸ Common issues include noise abatement orders and/or other neighbour disputes relating to the operation of venues; indeed, the operators of the Night & Day Café, which hosted our Manchester roundtable, could not themselves attend the discussion because of a hearing relating to a noise dispute ongoing since 2021 that

202 Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))

203 [Qq32–33](#)

204 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#)); [Q62](#)

205 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#)); [Qq62, 65–66](#)

206 [Q63](#)

207 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) paras 11–13

208 Music Venue Trust, [Annual Report 2023](#) (23 January 2024), p. 14

relates to a flat with an adjoining wall that was not soundproofed during its development.²⁰⁹ GMV representatives argued that gentrification was a key factor behind redevelopments forcing out venue owners. Gavin Sharp, chief executive of venue Band on the Wall, which we visited in Manchester, said that venues often set up in areas where rents were cheap and subsequently helped catalyse regeneration, but in turn then faced the threat of rising rents or noise abatement orders.²¹⁰

91. As our predecessor Committee discussed, there has been progress in supporting venues through the explicit inclusion of an “agent of change principle” in the July 2018 revision of the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).²¹¹ “Agent of change” describes approaches to promoting harmonious relationships between new (typically residential) building developments and existing noise sources, such as music venues, pubs, sports clubs and places of worship.²¹² Fundamentally, the principle affirms that “existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established”.²¹³ As the NPPF sets out, “[w]here the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or ‘agent of change’) should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed”.²¹⁴ The principle is often referred to in the context of property developers installing appropriate sound insulation; however, it can have broader applications, such as tenant agreements and financial arrangements.

92. While the introduction of agent of change principles has been welcomed by the sector, the issues observed by our predecessor committee—that there might be a risk in how planning authorities would interpret and apply its wording with consistency and certainty across the country—has indeed been borne out.²¹⁵ As Mark Davyd summarised, “developers want to develop, which is good for building homes and so on, but they tend to try to challenge how much of it they have to do”.²¹⁶ It was also suggested that agent of change had not alleviated some of the broader knock-on issues caused by mass redevelopments. LIVE chief executive Jon Collins noted, for example, that mass development in the Baltic Triangle in Liverpool had put local venues under pressure.²¹⁷

93. Creative UK put the impetus on local government to lead on work to mitigate GMV closures for operational and tenancy-related reasons, stating that it “believes that local councils must ensure that developers continue to meet their obligations as the Agent of Change”.²¹⁸ Music industry stakeholders meanwhile explicitly called for agent of change principles to be put on a statutory basis.²¹⁹ Jon Collins said that “fundamentally, we all welcome agent of change but it needs more teeth”.²²⁰ UK Music, the umbrella body for the

209 [“Legendary Manchester venue Night & Day to contest Noise Abatement Notice in court next week”](#), DJ Mag, 26 January 2024

210 [“The whole ecosystem is collapsing: inside the crisis in Britain’s live music scene”](#), The Guardian, 1 March 2024

211 Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2017–19, [Live music](#), HC 733, paras 74–76

212 *Ibid.*, para 74

213 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, [National Planning Policy Framework: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment](#) (December 2023), para 193

214 *Ibid.*

215 Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2017–19, [Live music](#), HC 733, para 75

216 [Q35](#)

217 [Q37](#)

218 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#)) para 18.3

219 UK Music ([GMV0006](#)); [Qq35–38](#)

220 [Q37](#)

wider music industry, wrote that “[t]o ensure reliable protections for venues, it is essential to enshrine agent of change in law and move beyond its current implementation through guidance and policy”.²²¹

94. Alongside enshrining agent of change in law, Mark Davyd called for the Government to grant a statutory right of consultation for MVT in planning decisions, as currently exists with the Theatres Trust with respect to local theatre buildings. We note, however, that the Theatres Trust is a statutory advisory body, unlike MVT.²²²

95. Despite the welcome introduction of the agent of change principles, venues are still facing a widespread risk of closures due to planning and redevelopment-related issues. We recommend that the agent of change principles are put on a statutory footing at the earliest opportunity.

Commission on merchandise sales

96. The extensive costs incurred in touring means that merchandise sales are a key source of income for an artist and their businesses. Typically, they make the difference between profit and loss for artists.²²³ Lily Fontaine of English Teacher, who’s recent album has received critical acclaim and debuted at Number 8 on the Official Albums Chart,²²⁴ told us “[i]n real terms, we do not expect to make any profit from our tours”, and that “if we do, it is a tiny amount, and it is because our label has chucked us some money to make things even, and then we earn a little from selling merch”.²²⁵

97. The vital stream of income for artists from merchandise can, however, be subject to significant fees by venues. A petition from the FAC claimed that, “in some instances, these fees amount to 25% of gross revenue plus VAT” and “because of excessive commission fees, the venue will make more money from merchandise sales than the artist themselves”.²²⁶ In an open letter published alongside the petition, the FAC argued that “[i]n many instances, venues have sold on or outsourced their merchandising rights to a third-party—meaning that fees appear ‘baked in’ to hire costs, with little room for negotiation”.²²⁷ Lily Fontaine also told us that “once you move up to bigger venues, [merch sales] can be diminished through the cuts taken from those bigger capacity venues”.²²⁸

98. The FAC has run a campaign called “100% Venues” since January 2022. The campaign calls for an “end to punitive fees”, and sets out four principles for venues that cannot get to 0% commission:

- Support acts are never charged commission on merchandise sales;
- Artists are offered the option to staff and operate merchandise operations themselves;

221 UK Music ([GMV0006](#))

222 [Q35](#)

223 [Q101](#); see also Music Managers Forum (MMF), Featured Artists Coalition (FAC) ([GMV0002](#))

224 “*James’s Yummy and Mark Knopfler’s One Deep River in competition for UK Number 1 album*”, Official Charts, 15 April 2024; Official Charts, ‘[English Teacher](#)’, accessed 19 April 2024

225 [Q94](#)

226 Change.org, ‘[Featured Artists Coalition: Let artists keep their merchandise money](#)’, accessed 19 March 2024

227 Featured Artists’ Coalition, ‘[#100PercentVenues Petition and Open Letter](#)’, accessed 17 April 2024

228 [Q94](#)

- Terms, including rates, are fully agreed in advance, with no surprises upon arrival at the venue; and
- Terms must always be open to negotiation to end “cartel-like fee-setting behaviour”.²²⁹

The FAC also publishes a directory of UK venues that charge 0% commission on merchandise sales as a resource for touring artists. Discussing the reason behind the principles, David Martin told us that “we are not asking venues to be out of pocket; we are saying we want to end punitive fees”.²³⁰

99. The merchandise campaign is backed by over 60 industry bodies and businesses, including UK Music, MVT, Independent Venue Week, AIF, PRS for Music, Musicians’ Union, the MMF and AIP, and has gained traction in North America due to the FAC’s partnership with the Union of Musicians & Allied Workers and support from Canadian artist Cadence Weapon.²³¹ Venue representatives themselves have also endorsed the campaign. At our Manchester roundtable, there was consensus that venues should not touch merchandise revenues, and an expectation that their peers should do the same. David Martin told us that Academy Music Group, which operates venues ranging between 800–3,000 capacity plus the 5,000 capacity Brixton Academy, had recently dropped its commission from 25% plus VAT to 15% plus VAT.²³² UK Music’s submission called on the Government to “aid efforts to stop the practice of punitive fees being charged”.²³³

100. As the costs of touring have mounted and opportunities to perform live are becoming squeezed, merchandise revenues are increasingly important to sustain the livelihood of professional artists and their business partners. We welcome that grassroots music venues are committed to ensuring artists can retain all of their merchandise revenues, despite their own need for income.

101. We support the Featured Artists’ Coalition’s campaign for an end to punitive fees and its four principles on merchandise commissions, particularly given the current economic environment in which artists are trying to make a living. We call on all venues and trade bodies in the live music sector to follow the FAC’s merchandise principles.

229 [Q101](#); see also Featured Artists’ Coalition, ‘[Welcome to the FAC ‘100% Venues’ campaign](#)’, accessed 19 March 2024

230 [Q101](#)

231 [Q102](#); UK Music ([GMV0006](#)); see also: “[Call for more US venues to stop taking cut of artist merch sales](#)”, NME, 1 February 2023

232 [Qq101–102](#)

233 UK Music ([GMV0006](#))

Conclusions and recommendations

Grassroots music in crisis

1. The crisis affecting grassroots music venues and the broader live music ecosystem, including artists, promoters and festivals, is of deep concern to music lovers, local communities and all those who depend on the sector's economic and cultural success. We also recognise and share concerns that these issues are affecting the broader night-time venues that host music, including clubs and electronic music spaces. These sectors must not be allowed to continue to decline, but the current support is insufficient to prevent this. (Paragraph 19)
2. While our work has focused on immediate solutions to support grassroots music, a comprehensive review of the live music ecosystem is needed to fully explore the long-term challenges and the interventions needed to protect it. *We recommend that the Government launch a fan-led review of live and electronic music in the summer of 2024, to bring together all parts of the ecosystem and report within the next twelve months.* (Paragraph 23)

A live music levy

3. We are encouraged that stakeholders across the sector are taking a levy seriously and already coming together to propose solutions in good faith. While we agree with artists and managers that a compulsory levy on arena and stadium tickets would be the fairest and most sustainable mechanism to support grassroots music venues without requiring downward pressures on artists' share of revenues, we accept that the urgency of the crisis in grassroots means that a voluntary levy is the most feasible way to have an immediate impact. If the live music sector is serious about creating an effective voluntary levy, it must be equitable for all stakeholders and in place as soon as possible. (Paragraph 40)
4. We recommend that the live music industry introduce a voluntary levy on arena and stadium tickets no later than September 2024 to support grassroots music venues, artists and promoters. (Paragraph 41)
5. *We further recommend that the Government should undertake and publish an assessment of the effectiveness of the voluntary levy on grassroots music venues no later than 12 months after its establishment.* (Paragraph 42)
6. *If a voluntary levy is unable to be agreed by September 2024, or if the assessment of the voluntary levy concludes it is not collecting the income required to support the GMV sector, the Government should introduce a statutory levy at the earliest subsequent opportunity.* (Paragraph 43)
7. There is broad consensus that a charitable organisation is best placed to administer the levy funds. While Arts Council England is already well-established and well-placed to distribute funding, we accept that a trust led by a sector umbrella body, such as the LIVE Trust or Music Venues Trust, is the best way to collect, manage and distribute a voluntary fund. *For this to succeed, we recommend that it contains*

broad representation for all stakeholders, including venues from GMVs to arenas, artists and their business partners and national and independent promoters among its trustees. A trust must provide the utmost transparency and due diligence for its decisions to ensure it can maintain the confidence of all stakeholders within the fragile live music ecosystem. (Paragraph 50)

VAT and business rate relief

8. A targeted and temporary cut to VAT for grassroots music venues on tickets would help to improve the immediate risk-profile of live music for promoters and in-house programmers, who take on the financial risk, and help get more shows into venues. *The Government should introduce a temporary cut to VAT, based on venue capacity, to stimulate grassroots music activity and the wider economic benefits to local areas that grassroots music shows provide. (Paragraph 59)*
9. We recognise that live music is one of many sectors calling for special treatment for VAT, and that the case for a long-term or permanent exemption requires a stronger evidence base for its economic impact than currently exists. *We recommend that the Treasury and DCMS undertake a comprehensive economic analysis of the impact on a cut to VAT in line with recommendations made in this report, including modelling: a cut to a 10% rate, which is the European average, on tickets, as well as alternative approaches such as VAT on food and beverages; a targeted intervention for different sizes of venue; and the indirect impacts to VAT revenues of venue closures and a reduction in live and electronic music events. (Paragraph 60)*
10. We welcome the Government's decision to extend business rates relief for grassroots music venues until the end of the 24/25 billing year. However, while we understand that the conventions around Budget announcements are well-established, this continued uncertainty creates a new cliff-edge for the already precarious grassroots music sector. *We recommend that Government should ensure that any future fiscal policy decisions relating to grassroots music venues gives venues certainty and long-term security. If the Treasury intends to end business rates relief for GMVs, the reduction in relief should be tapered in order to avoid an immediate shock to the sector. (Paragraph 64)*

Public funding

11. We welcome the efforts by Arts Council England to address issues resulting from the live music sector's ability to access public funding raised in our predecessor committee's 'Live music' inquiry six years ago, and indeed grassroots music venues said that ACE funding through Covid had been a lifeline. However, we are concerned that perceptions and administrative burdens remain largely the same. *We recommend that the Government and Arts Council work to reduce the administrative burden of applying for public funding. (Paragraph 75)*

Stakeholder disputes

12. We recognise that, in the current economic context and amidst a closure crisis, there are frustrations among venue operators and promoters with PRS for Music's

fees and processes regarding licensing. We also recognise that PRS for Music has a responsibility to the songwriters, composers and music publishers it represents, and is a vital part of the music ecosystem. Songwriter rights and royalties should be protected but tariffs should be fair and terms reasonable for licensees. (Paragraph 88)

13. The comprehensive Tariff Review, due to begin in summer 2024, is a useful opportunity to consider how concerns that have been raised with us, such as litigation, the ease of navigating processes and whether a GMV-specific tariff is feasible, can be mitigated or addressed for the next period. *We recommend that our successor committee consider progress in the next Parliament.* (Paragraph 89)
14. Despite the welcome introduction of the agent of change principles, venues are still facing a widespread risk of closures due to planning and redevelopment-related issues. *We recommend that the agent of change principles are put on a statutory footing at the earliest opportunity.* (Paragraph 95)
15. As the costs of touring have mounted and opportunities to perform live are becoming squeezed, merchandise revenues are increasingly important to sustain the livelihood of professional artists and their business partners. We welcome that grassroots music venues are committed to ensuring artists can retain all of their merchandise revenues, despite their own need for income. (Paragraph 100)
16. We support the Featured Artists' Coalition's campaign for an end to punitive fees and its four principles on merchandise commissions, particularly given the current economic environment in which artists are trying to make a living. *We call on all venues and trade bodies in the live music sector to follow the FAC's merchandise principles.* (Paragraph 101)

Annex 1: Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
ACE	Arts Council England. England's national development agency for culture and the creative industries, funded by the UK Government and The National Lottery.
AIP	Association of Independent Promoters. A trade association bringing together independent promoters from across the UK.
Agent	A professional who books musical shows, live performances and concerts for artists.
Artist	Someone who performs the work written by a songwriter or composer during the recording of the track (see featured artist/performer and non-featured artist/performer). Also referred to as a performer or recording artist.
Artist business	The ecosystem of professionals who manage operations on behalf of an artist so they can focus on making and performing music. This will usually include a manager, agent, accountant and lawyer, as well as live music professionals on an ad hoc basis.
Author	A catch-all term for composers and songwriters.
CMO	Collective management organisation. A non-governmental body created by copyright law or private agreement which licenses copyright works on behalf of the creators and engages in collective rights management. Also known as a collecting society, copyright collective, copyright society, copyright collecting agency, licensing agency and copyright collecting society.
Collective licensing	When rightsholders license their rights together as one entity, appointing a collecting society to enforce and administer these rights on their behalf. Often subject to additional regulation to address competition law concerns.
Collective rights management	The licensing of copyright and related rights by organisations acting on behalf of rightsholders.
Composer	Someone who writes music for songs of any genre.
CPA	Concert Promoters Association. A trade organisation representing the interests of live entertainment companies.
Creator	A catch-all term referring to composers, songwriters, artists, performers and producers.
DCMS	The Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The UK Government's ministers and officials responsible for policymaking in these areas.
FAC	Featured Artists' Coalition. A UK trade organisation representing the specific, collective rights and interests of featured artists, with a global membership of creators at all stages of their careers.
Featured artist	A performer whose name the performance or recording is released under, as opposed to a non-featured artist/performer.

Term	Definition
GMAS	<p>A local brick-and-mortar business that contributes to the live music offer in communities but lack the music-focused programme of GMVs.</p> <p>The Music Venue Trust provides a comprehensive definition based on the cultural role and amenities and infrastructure of GMASs, which can be found in full on its website.²³⁴</p>
GMP	<p>Grassroots music pub. A local brick-and-mortar business that contributes to the live music offer in communities but lack the full facilities and/or cultural programme of GMVs.</p> <p>The Music Venue Trust provides a comprehensive definition based on the cultural role of GMPs, which can be found in full on its website.²³⁵</p>
GMV	<p>Grassroots music venue. A local brick-and-mortar business of relatively limited capacity with the licence, staff, infrastructure and amenities to put on live music.</p> <p>The Music Venue Trust provides a comprehensive definition based on the cultural role, economic activity and amenities and infrastructure, which can be found in full on its website.²³⁶ The definition was agreed at its industry event Venues Day in October 2015 by figures from the music industry and government and used the Mayor of London's Music Venues Rescue Plan²³⁷ published the same month.</p>
Ivors Academy	<p>A trade association representing professional songwriters and composers to support, protect and celebrate music creators, including through its internationally respected Ivors Awards. Formerly named the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA). Now named for Ivor Novello, a Welsh composer and actor.</p>
MMF	<p>Music Managers' Forum. A UK trade organisation with a membership of over 1,000 that engages, advises and lobbies industry associates and wider industry on issues that are relevant to music manager.</p>
MU	<p>Musicians' Union. A trade union for performers, songwriters and composers run by its 32,000 members.</p>
MVT	<p>Music Venues Trust. A trade organisation operating a membership network, called the Music Venues Alliance, representing grassroots music venues in the UK.</p>
NAA	<p>National Arenas Association. A trade organisation representing the 23 major arenas across the UK and Ireland established in 1991, providing a networking forum and developing best practice for its membership.</p>
Performer	<p>Someone who performs the work written by a songwriter or composer during the recording of the track (see featured artist/performer and non-featured artist/performer). Also referred to as an artist or recording artist.</p>

234 Music Venue Trust, '[Grassroots Music & Arts Space \(GMAS\) Definition](#)', accessed 27 March 2024

235 Music Venue Trust, '[Grassroots Music Pub \(GMP\) Definition](#)', accessed 27 March 2024

236 Music Venue Trust, '[Grassroots Music Venues \(GMVs\) Definition](#)', accessed 27 March 2024

237 Mayor of London's Music Venues Taskforce, '[London's Grassroots Music Venues Rescue Plan](#)' (October 2015), pp. 34–7

Term	Definition
Performing rights	A specific copyright control set out in UK law regarding the public performance and communication of works.
PPL	Phonographic Performance Limited. A collecting society that collects royalties on behalf of over 110,000 record companies and performers. It licenses recorded music played in public (at pubs, nightclubs, restaurants, shops, offices and many other business types) and broadcast (TV and radio). This includes when their recorded music is played around the world through a network of international agreements with other collecting societies
Promoter	A professional who partners with venues and artists to promote and organise music events.
PRS for Music	A collecting society that is responsible for the collective licensing of rights in the musical works of 150,000 composers, songwriters and publishers and an international repertoire of 28 million songs. The Mechanical-Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) collects for 'mechanical' reproduction rights and the Performing Right Society (PRS) collects for public performance rights.
LIVE	Live music Industry Venues & Entertainment. The umbrella trade organisation for the live music sector formed in response to the pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
Music publisher	A music company that owns and controls song rights, so called because they historically published sheet music books.
Record label	A company that markets recorded music and corresponding videos, invests in new artists and enforces copyright, so called because of the circular label that appeared on the cover of physical sales. Also known as a record company.
Recording rights	Copyright in sound recording of a performance. Also known as master rights.
Song rights	Copyright in the song lyrics and music composition.
Songwriter	Someone who writes music and lyrics for songs of any genre.
STAR	Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers. The trade organisation for the UK ticketing industry. It is approved by Government under the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015.
Tour manager	A professional who may be hired by artists and their agents to organise logistics of a tour, such as transportation, accommodation, equipment rentals and, if needed/able, crew.
UK Music	An industry-funded umbrella trade organisation established in October 2008 to represent the collective interests of the recorded, published and live arms of the British music industry. It has an association agreement with LIVE.
Work	The underlying music composition, comprising music and lyrics.
Writer	A catch-all term for composers and songwriters.

Annex 2: Roundtable attendees

Manchester attendees (Night & Day Café)		
Venue	Location	Capacity
Eagle Inn	Salford	80
Albert Hall	Manchester	1900
Gorilla/Deaf Institute	Manchester	550/260
The Snug	Atherton/Wigan	80
Band on the Wall	Manchester	500/100
Future Yard	Birkenhead	350
Bootleg Social	Blackpool	350
E-Rooms	Skelmersdale	120
Meraki	Liverpool	300
The Ferret	Preston	200
Barrow Underground Music Society	Barrow-in-Furness	120
Dryad Works	Sheffield	320
Old Abbey Taphouse	Manchester	300
Live Rooms	Chester	500
The Wardrobe	Leeds	499
The Parish	Huddersfield	350
The Lubber Fiend	Newcastle	140
The Globe	Newcastle	100
Peggy's Skylight	Nottingham	25–90

London attendees (Portcullis House, Westminster)		
Venue	Location	Capacity
Village Underground & Earth	London	720/1200 & 750
100 Club	London	320
Sound Lounge	London	200
Colour Factory	London	600
Ormside Projects	London	200
Suki10c	Birmingham	180
Coventry Empire	Coventry	1200/700
John Peel Centre for Creative Arts	Stowmarket	240
The Prince Albert	Stroud	100

London attendees (Portcullis House, Westminster)		
Venue	Location	Capacity
Bedford Esquires	Bedford	280
Hot Box Live	Chelmsford	70
Night & Day Café	Manchester	260
Jam Jar	Bristol	175
Stage Door	Southampton	170
The Hope & Ruin	Brighton	150
The Lab	Northampton	100
The Smokehouse	Ipswich	80
Epic Studios	Norwich	300–900
The Hot Tin	Faversham	200
Bush Hall	London	450
Corsica Studios	London	300
Faith In Strangers	Margate	350
Railway Inn	Winchester	200
Ramsgate Music Hall	Ramsgate	130
Pioneer Club	St Albans	500
The Boileroom	Guildford	275
Booking Hall	Dover	300
Brudenell Social Club	Leeds	400/250

Formal minutes

Wednesday 8 May 2024

Members present:

Dame Caroline Dinenage, in the Chair

Steve Brine

Clive Efford

Julie Elliott

Simon Jupp

John Nicolson

Alex Sobel

Jane Stevenson

Grassroots music venues

Draft Report (*Grassroots music venues*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 101 read and agreed to.

Annexes agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No.134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Tuesday 14 May at 9.45 am.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 26 March 2024

Jon Collins, Chief Executive, LIVE; **Mark Davyd**, Chief Executive, Music Venue Trust; **John Drury**, Chair, National Arenas Association, Vice-President and General Manager, OVO Arena Wembley

[Q1–40](#)

Stuart Galbraith, Vice-Chair, Concert Promoters Association, Chief Executive, Kilimanjaro Live; **Gavin Larkins**, Director of Commercial Development and Sales, PRS for Music; **Anna Moulson**, Co-Chair, Association of Independent Promoters

[Q41–78](#)

Lily Fontaine, vocalist, English Teacher; **Kwame Kwaten**, Vice Chair, Music Managers Forum; **David Martin**, Chief Executive, Featured Artists Coalition

[Q79–104](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

GMV numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Arts Council England ([GMV0005](#))
- 2 Association of Independent Festivals ([GMV0007](#))
- 3 Association of Independent Promoters ([GMV0008](#))
- 4 Creative UK ([GMV0001](#))
- 5 Local Government Association (LGA) ([GMV0003](#))
- 6 Music Managers Forum (MMF) and Featured Artists Coalition (FAC) ([GMV0002](#))
- 7 PRS for Music ([GMV0009](#))
- 8 The Old Abbey Taphouse (Steam Hubs & Pubs CIC) ([GMV0004](#))
- 9 UK Music ([GMV0006](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2023–24

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Safety at major sporting events	HC 174
2nd	Gambling regulation	HC 176
3rd	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the BBC Board	HC 383
4th	Equity in Cricket	HC 526
5th	Creator remuneration	HC 156
6th	Trusted voices	HC 175
1st Special Report	Draft Media Bill: Government Responses to the Committee's Twelfth and Thirteenth Reports of Session 2022–23	HC 155
2nd Special Report	Connected tech: smart or sinister?: Government and the Information Commissioner's Office Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2022–23	HC 302
3rd Special Report	Connected tech: AI and creative technology: Government Response to the Committee's Eleventh Report of Session 2022–23	HC 441
4th Special Report	NFTs and the Blockchain: the risks to sport and culture: Government Response to the Committee's Fourteenth Report of Session 2022–23	HC 461
5th Special Report	Safety at major sporting events: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 617
6th Special Report	Gambling regulation: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 698

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Amending the Online Safety Bill	HC 271
2nd	Promoting Britain abroad	HC 156
3rd	Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda	HC 155
4th	What next for the National Lottery?	HC 154
5th	Economics of music streaming: follow-up	HC 874
6th	Current issues in rugby union	HC 1018

Number	Title	Reference
7th	Sustainability of local journalism	HC 153
8th	Appointment of Richard Sharp as Chair of the BBC	HC 1147
9th	Football governance	HC 1288
10th	Connected tech: smart or sinister?	HC 157
11th	Connected tech: AI and creative technology	HC 1643
12th	Draft Media Bill: Radio Measures	HC 1287
13th	Draft Media Bill: Final Report	HC 1807
14th	NFTs and the Blockchain: the risks to sport and culture	HC 598
1st Special	Major cultural and sporting events: Government Response to Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 452
2nd Special	Influencer Culture: Lights, camera, inaction?: ASA System and CMA Responses to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 610
3rd Special	Influencer Culture: Lights, camera, inaction?: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 687
4th Special	Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP	HC 801
5th Special	Promoting Britain abroad	HC 1103
6th Special	Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda	HC 1104
7th Special	What next for the National Lottery?: Government and Gambling Commission Responses to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1208
8th Special	Economics of music streaming: follow-up: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1245
9th Special	The sustainability of local journalism: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report	HC 1378
10th Special	Appointment of Richard Sharp as Chair of the BBC: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report	HC 1641
11th Special	Football Governance: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report	HC 1850
12th	What next for the National Lottery?: National Lottery Distributors' Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1913

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The future of UK music festivals	HC 49
2nd	Economics of music streaming	HC 50
3rd	Concussion in sport	HC 46

Number	Title	Reference
4th	Sport in our communities	HC 45
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Information Commissioner	HC 260
6th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 261
7th	Racism in cricket	HC 1001
8th	The Draft Online Safety Bill and the legal but harmful debate	HC 1039
9th	Major cultural and sporting events	HC 259
10th	Another pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 1200
11th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of Ofcom	HC 48
12th	Influencer culture: Lights, camera, inaction?	HC 258
1st Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Government Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 273
2nd Special Report	Economics of music streaming: Government and Competition and Markets Authority Responses to Committee's Second Report	HC 719
3rd Special Report	Sport in our communities: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report	HC 761
4th Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Ofcom Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 832
5th Special Report	The Draft Online Safety Bill and the legal but harmful debate: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report	HC 1039

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The Covid-19 crisis and charities	HC 281
2nd	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic	HC 234
3rd	Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report	HC 291
4th	Broadband and the road to 5G	HC 153
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the BBC	HC 1119
6th	The future of public service broadcasting	HC 156
1st Special Report	BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2018–19: TV licences for over 75s Government and the BBC's Responses to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 98
2nd Special Report	The Covid-19 crisis and charities: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019–21	HC 438

Number	Title	Reference
3rd Special Report	Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report: Government Response to Committee's Third Report of Session 2019–21	HC 885
4th Special Report	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 894