

Your response

Question	Your response
Do you have any comments on our proposals?	<p data-bbox="807 353 997 383">Confidential? N</p> <p data-bbox="807 461 965 490">Introduction</p> <p data-bbox="807 497 1362 775">BEIRG has worked well with Ofcom in recent years finalising the details of the 700 MHz Funding Scheme and helping to ensure its smooth operation. We have been encouraged by the development of a strong working relationship in which Ofcom have listened to the concerns of the PMSE community and acted upon them.</p> <p data-bbox="807 819 1378 1133">It was therefore disappointing to see no mention of PMSE in Ofcom’s plans for the forthcoming year. As a key stakeholder and contributor to the thriving Creative Industries sector, BEIRG would have hoped for a commitment from Ofcom to continue working with the PMSE community and to give us the confidence to invest in the future development of technology.</p> <p data-bbox="807 1178 1029 1207">Security of tenure</p> <p data-bbox="807 1214 1385 1666">The clearance of both the 800MHz and 700MHz bands has already caused significant disruption to the PMSE sector and despite Government financial support, has negatively impacted the industry over the last 10 years. The industry practices have become even more spectrally efficient and technological developments have helped that too BUT ensuring the sector has reasonable, protected access to sufficient quantity and quality of spectrum is of paramount importance, not only to the affected companies but to the entertainment industry and UK economy as a whole.</p> <p data-bbox="807 1673 1374 1986">Therefore, the PMSE sector is looking for some security of tenure and reassurance that this is not to be a 5-7 yearly cycle. We are concerned that there will be another clearance program, either of 500MHz or of the wider UHF band as more programme delivery becomes IP or satellite based. The upheaval for those who provide content and support our creative industries cannot be over-stated and another</p>

move would have a highly damaging impact on the PMSE community.

Impact of COVID

Before COVID, the UK live events sector was thriving, and growing. It faced a cliff-edge when, in a matter of days, the entire industry was impacted by the nationwide March lockdown and subsequent restrictions on gatherings of more than 6 people. In essence, with no time to plan, people's livelihoods have been put on hold for an indefinite period of time. This has severely impacted BEIRG members - as many are freelancers, they have been ineligible for any of the Government support schemes – this is an industry which has developed a reliance on freelance workers, and it has become clear that there needs to be more understanding at Government level regarding the very specific way the live touring industry in particular operates and the reasons why.

Unlike other countries, the support from the Government for the freelance workforce and the live events sector has been sparse. The Cultural Recovery Fund, which is so often quoted by the Government in response to questioning on this matter, is mostly aimed at giving support to venues that are unable to open rather than to the personnel who work within these settings. As a result, there are many who work throughout the supply chain who are living on the breadline and have no idea when they will be in a position to begin working again. As live events can theoretically operate, even though in reality they cannot, this bars them from many Government support schemes for which they might have been eligible. The uncertainty of the industry's future compounds what is already a perilous situation for so many.

As the industry looks to re-start over the course of 2021, BEIRG very much hopes that Ofcom are mindful of the difficulties the creative industries has faced, with little or no support, and will ensure that there are no large scale changes that are likely to further impact our members. We have no doubt that once theatres, music venues and festivals open up

again, they will be extremely busy, but it will take quite some time before the sector has recovered financially.

Conclusion

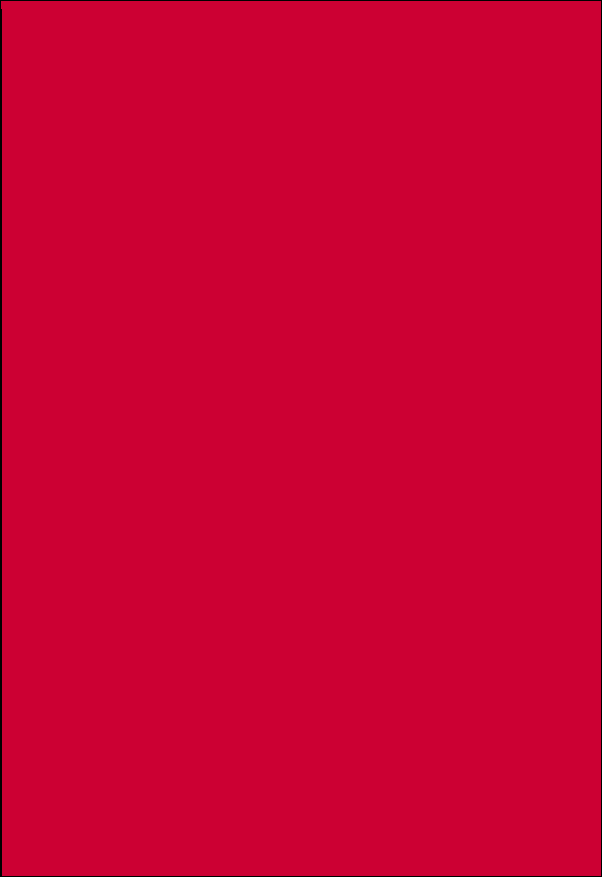
The PMSE sector faced a damaging loss of spectrum access as a result of the 700 MHz spectrum clearance, but has responded to the challenge to use the new allocation of spectrum as efficiently as possible, and have worked with Ofcom at all stages of the clearance programme.

However, it is crucially important that PMSE, now through the process of moving from 700 MHz and the associated disruption are given reassurances by Ofcom that their new 'home' will remain as such for a considerable period of time.

British Entertainment Industry Radio Group

The British Entertainment Industry Radio Group (BEIRG) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works for the benefit of all those who produce, distribute and ultimately consume content made using radio spectrum in the UK. Venues and productions that depend on radio spectrum include TV, film, sport, theatre, churches, schools, live music (including music festivals), newsgathering, political and corporate events, and many others. BEIRG campaigns for the maintenance of 'Programme Making and Special Events' (PMSE) access to sufficient quantity of interference-free spectrum for use by wireless production tools such as wireless microphones and wireless in-ear monitor (IEM) systems.

As well as being vital in producing live content, wireless audio PMSE technologies play a key role in helping to improve security and safety levels within the entertainment industry and other sectors. Their benefits include improving the management of electrical safety, the reduction of noise levels, the development of safety in communications and reducing trip hazards as well as providing an essential tool for the security orientated services. Wireless equipment and the spectrum it operates in are now crucial to the British entertainment industry.



BEIRG is a member of the Association of Professional Wireless Production Technologies (APWPT)¹, which promotes on an international level the efficient and demand-driven provision and use of production frequencies for professional event productions, as well as safeguarding such production frequencies for the users on the long run.

¹<http://www.apwpt.org/>