



Engaging with the new Government: Supporting you to make the case for theatre.

What happens now?

On Friday 5th July, after winning a majority, Sir Keir Starmer officially became prime minister and formed a new Labour government.

Labour won 411 seats, up 209 from the 2019 election. The Conservatives won 121 seats, down 244 from their 2019 total of 365 seats. The Liberal Democrats gained 61 seats for a total of 72, while the Scottish National Party won nine seats, down from 48 in 2019. Reform UK won five seats and the Green Party won four. Sinn Féin won seven seats in Northern Ireland (unchanged on 2019), while the Democratic Unionist Party won five (down three on 2019).

300 MPs were re-elected, while 335 became MPs for the first time. Another 15 have returned as MPs after a gap in service.

Why is this important?

This is a key time for us to make the case for theatre. New MPs, ministers, and councillors want to understand local issues and align themselves with positive things about the area they represent – particularly things that bring jobs to the area and that people value. Is there anything that fits that bill more perfectly than theatre?

Politicians make decisions that affect many of you both directly and indirectly. Arts funding is an issue that has a local and national dimension and matters enormously to many of our members. Similarly, we are keen for members to highlight other local-relevant issues that can be addressed at a national level, including funding for theatre visits for school pupils and investment in our theatre buildings.

What can you do?

To help you do this, there are some key things you may want to consider.

Get in the know: Firstly, check to see what constituency your organisation is in and who your MP is – this information can be found here:

<https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

You can find your local councillors here:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors>

Engage: You might want to consider writing to your representatives and invite them to meet to discuss their plans for culture in your area, and to tell them what you do in, and with, your local community.

MPs and councillors love to visit iconic locations in the area they are representing – it is a great photo opportunity and generates some positive local press coverage. It is also a great opportunity for them to see the work that you do and to get to know you better.

Things they are likely to be interested in, include:

1. Your role as a key institution in the local economy and local community.
2. Any schemes you provide that help to engage audiences who may otherwise struggle to access theatre.
3. Any work you do to otherwise engage with and support the local community.
4. The number of people you employ and any schemes you provide to train local people, particularly young people.

We have prepared a [template letter](#) for to use that you can tailor as you see fit.

If a representative does visit your theatre, make sure you share on socials using our hashtag, **#ThrivingTheatres**.

Advocate: Engaging with local politicians is an opportunity to share the transformational power of theatre with them and to talk about the conditions that would enable theatre to thrive. Here are some key messages you might want to consider sharing (more information can be found in our [briefing for MPs](#):

1. Break down barriers to opportunity with Theatre for Every Child. Expand access to culture by funding a theatre visit for every child before they leave school. Growing children's access supports educational attainment, boosts wellbeing and confidence as well as introducing young people to the range of skilled jobs in the creative industries.
2. Kick start local economies, deliver social good and make Britain a clean energy superpower through investment in theatre buildings. This urgent and necessary investment will maintain our world-class theatre sector and enable it to reach its potential in benefiting individuals, communities, and society. Investment in theatre buildings, an essential part of cultural and community infrastructure, will help protect venues from closure, improve their environmental sustainability, reduce operating costs, create more jobs, deliver more outreach, and improve accessibility.
3. Kickstart economic growth through sustainable public investment in the arts. Public investment in the arts delivers transformative social good and a net benefit to HM Treasury. But through a more strategic approach, considering both arts council and local authority funding, we believe public funds could be more effective. Collaborate with us and other stakeholders to strategically review public investment in the arts to achieve the most effective results for taxpayers.

If you host meetings or visits to your organisations, shout about what you do, what matters to you and our shared priorities on your website and social media. Please use the hashtag **#ThrivingTheatres** for any posts and don't forget to tag us @soltnews and @uk_theatre. If you would like any other branded assets, please drop the Public Affairs team a line.

If you have any questions, we are here to help! Do also let us know about your activity, so we can build a picture of which MPs have been engaged. Feel free to get in touch PublicAffairs@soltukt.co.uk.