

**Five Reassurances For Reopening**

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# Introduction



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Partner

For over a year now, we've been conducting research into how audiences are feeling about returning to events and venues, and what they've been doing in the meantime.

Indigo's first survey, **After the Interval**, was launched in April 2020 and since then we have worked with over 500 cultural organisations and heard from almost 600,000 audience members.

We have also run focus groups, partner studies and done in depth research into particular audience segments.

Our **Culture Restart Toolkit**, developed with our Insights Alliance partners Baker Richards and One Further, continues to track audience sentiment in real time.

The depth and breadth of our research has enabled us to develop the **Five Reassurances** – five areas of reassurance you need to give audiences in order to build confidence.



**Flo Carr**

Associate

# Five Reassurances for Reopening

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1

**Health & Safety**  
Reassurance



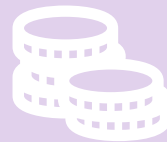
2

**Access**  
Reassurance



3

**Financial**  
Reassurance



4

**Social**  
Reassurance



5

**Brand**  
Reassurance





## Health & Safety Reassurance



### What are the main audience concerns?

Some audience members are concerned about returning to **crowded indoor venues** and worried about their personal safety – and want to know what measures the venues have in place before they return.

Many frequent cultural attenders want **safety measures**, such as **face masks** and **socially distanced** seating, **to remain in place** at theatres and other cultural venues beyond government guidelines.

**This type of reassurance is particularly important to those who are:**

- **most at risk** – older audience members and those vulnerable to Covid
- **more cautious** – anyone who just needs a little more reassurance

“Whilst culture is important, family safety is more important so I will **need to feel safe and confident before I book** for any indoor event.”

“It will be some time before I **feel comfortable** in busy situations again.”

### Resources and best practice



The **See it Safely Toolkit**, developed by UK Theatre and SOLT, supports theatres to reopen while **building up audience confidence**. It includes suggested signage, a video for audiences, website copy for you to use and more.



Visit Britain's **We're Good to Go** industry standard provides a 'ring of confidence' for **cultural attractions and destinations**. It provides reassurance to local residents and visitors that safe and clear procedures are in place.

### What can we do to reassure audiences?

- Ensure that **Health & Safety information** is clear and easy to find on your **website** for anyone who needs it.
- Ensure your **signage** is **visible, up to date** and **accessible**.
- **Train Front of House staff** to feel confident enforcing the venue rules.
- Be **clear** and **consistent** – make sure audiences know what to expect when they visit.

2

## Access

Reassurance



## What are the main audience concerns?

Audiences are **out of the habit of attending**, not used to planning travel by public transport or working out driving routes and parking.

They may also be **nervous** about what the **experience** will be like at the venue and how it will have changed since their last visit.

**Disabled audiences** are particularly concerned about their needs being forgotten with new seating plans or repurposed accessible toilets.

### This type of reassurance is particularly important to:

- **older audiences**
- **disabled audiences** - who already have higher barriers to attendance

"My worry is the **toilet situation...**  
Before Covid 19 the toilets were inadequate particularly if one has a **disability** like myself."

"**Travel by public transport** is a key issue for me and I would only travel off peak, if at all into the near future."

## Resources and reports



The **Seven Principles to Ensure an Inclusive Recovery** is a guide created by We Shall Not Be Removed to help the arts and entertainment sectors to **better support disability inclusion** post-Covid.



Australian disability consultant Morwenna Collett has written a report for the **Insights Alliance** looking at how **Culture Restart** responses differ for **disabled and vulnerable audiences**, and what that means for organisations reopening. [Read more →](#)

## What can we do to reassure audiences?

- Remind audiences of the **different travel options available** and let them know if anything has changed (e.g. road layout).
- Tell them **what to expect at the venue**, particularly if that has changed, for example where they will be asked to queue or if certain entrances are no longer in use. A video can be a great way to do this.
- Make sure disabled audience members are **considered in all your planning** - and inform them of any changes to facilities they are used to.

3

## Financial Reassurance



### What are the main audience concerns?

While guidelines are still changing, audiences are hesitant about **booking for events in the future** in case they are **cancelled** or they are **not able to attend**.

The majority say they would be **more likely to book** for future events if they knew they'd be able to get a **refund** or **exchange** if the show was cancelled or they were not able to attend because they needed to self-isolate.

#### This type of reassurance is particularly important to:

- **Younger audiences** - who may have less disposable income
- **Family audiences** - who tend to buy more tickets and are more likely to have seen a reduction in their household income due to Covid.

"I feel uncomfortable booking for future events because if shows are cancelled, I don't know if I **can get a refund** of my money!"

### Resources & great examples



The **See it Safely Toolkit**, includes a clear refunds and exchanges policy which organisations **need to adopt** in order to use the See it Safety kitemark.



**Portsmouth Guildhall** rebranded their existing refunds and exchanges policy into a '**Book with Confidence Guarantee**', promoting it to audiences as the point of booking to build reassurance. [Find out more →](#)

### What can we do to reassure them?

- Consider your **existing** refunds and exchanges policy - you may only **need to repackage** it to give reassurance or you may want to **relax it slightly**.
- Make sure audiences know **what your policy is** and can find it easily on the **website**. Remind them of the policy at the point of booking and ahead of their scheduled visit.
- **Train your Box Office staff** so they know what the policy is and can process any refunds or exchanges in a timely manner.

4

## Social Reassurance



### What are the main audience concerns?

For many audience members, the **social aspect** of cultural experiences is very important – they are used to attending with friends and having a drink or a meal as part of an evening out.

Some are concerned that **attending with restrictions in place** won't be the fun social experience that it used to be and they aren't sure if they will be able to have a drink and sit with their friends.

#### This type of reassurance is particularly important to:

- **Younger audience members**
- **Group bookers**

"I have always attended with a **group of my friends** and it would be nice to do this again."

"I miss the social side of live performance – a **meal and drinks with friends**, and the atmosphere in the theatre."

### Great examples



The **Belgrade Theatre Coventry** use **photos** and **videos** of audiences back at the venue along with their **positive quotes** from post-visit surveys. Showing other people having a great experience in the venue is a great way to give social reassurance. [See video →](#)

**barbican**

On their Covid safety section, the **Barbican** include stats from their audience surveys of the high % of visitors who said they felt safe or very safe in the venue. [See on the website →](#)

### What can we do to reassure them?

- Make it clear whether your **bar / café** will be open so audiences know what to expect.
- Let audiences know how seating works e.g. will they be able to **sit with their friends**?
- **Show images or videos** of other audience members enjoying a safe and sociable return to your venue.
- Ask your audiences to **rate their return** and publish stats about how confident and happy they felt.

5

**Brand**  
Reassurance



## What are the main audience concerns?

Experiencing culture is an **essential part of life** for many frequent attenders, something they have **desperately missed** over the last year and can't wait to return to.

Some are worried that venues **with restrictions in place** won't feel like they used to - they might be too 'sanitized', Covid measures will be too prominent and the experience **won't be the same**.

**This type of reassurance is particularly important to:**

- **Frequent attenders**
- **Members**

"I find the **constant reminders** that a venue is doing everything possible to 'keep people safe' quite **off-putting...**"

"Our family lives and breathes theatre. **Our children are desperate to get back into theatre**, we want to get back to normal."

## Great examples

NATIONAL  
FOOTBALL  
MUSEUM

The **National Football Museum** has done a great job of making sure their Covid safety signage is all on brand, including developing '**social distancing tactics**' on a football pitch design. [Check them out →](#)

HOME

In **HOME's** reopening video, Vogue performer Darren Pritchard guides you through all the necessary safety and venue information in uniquely 'HOME' fashion. [Watch now →](#)

## What can we do to reassure them?

- Have staff on the door, **welcoming** and **reassuring** visitors as they arrive.
- Make sure that the venue still feels like 'you' - **have fun with your signage** so it is less 'scary' and more 'on brand'.
- **Keep talking to your audiences** so they know you're thinking about them and want to understand how they feel.

**For further research visit [www.indigo-ltd.com](http://www.indigo-ltd.com)**

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