

## Tapering furlough scheme will result in more theatres permanently shutting their doors, warns Theatres Trust

**Theatres Trust**, the public advisory body for theatres, has today warned that more theatre operators will go bankrupt without continued support from the government's **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**.

On Friday 29 May, the Chancellor announced that from August employers will be required to make increasing contributions until the scheme ends in October.

The government scheme enabling employers to furlough staff has been a vital lifeline for theatre operators who lost their entire ticket revenue overnight when theatres closed in March. Organisations have been drawing on their limited reserves to meet operating costs as the lockdown continues but research by **Theatres Trust** shows that of the 581 theatres that are charities in the UK, 59% had less than three months operating costs in reserves and research by UK Theatre / SOLT identifies that 70% of theatres will run out of money by the end of 2020. The tapering of the Job Retention Scheme will only serve to accelerate these timetables and lead to further closures. The employer contributions will make redundancies throughout the sector inevitable and the ending of the scheme and resulting liabilities will close theatre businesses.

**Theatres Trust Director Jon Morgan** says "Four theatre operators have already gone in to administration since the lockdown began. Unfortunately, we expect this number to rise rapidly unless the government provides urgent support for the sector. While tapering of the furlough scheme makes sense in other parts of the economy as businesses reopen , theatres remain closed and the majority will be unable to operate viably with social distancing measures in place. We are calling on the government to extend the Job Retention Scheme in its full form to protect our nation's enviable theatres and the people who work in them, until such a time as theatres can reopen fully and safely".

Theatres Trust provides free advice and support to all types of theatre, which has included advising theatres on adapting their business plans in light of the pandemic and how to maintain buildings safely during lockdown.

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Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance. We champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. We do this by providing advice on the design, planning, development and sustainability of theatres, campaigning on behalf of theatres old and new and offering financial assistance through grants.