



Dear Mrs Follett,

I write to you representing Britain's £22 billion meetings and events industry, a sector creating over 1.78 million jobs, and contributing £3.8 billion in tax revenue to UK plc every year.

Few industries have been hit as hard as the meetings and events sector in the current economic environment with the industry relying heavily on business from both government and financial organisations. Additionally, the recent adverse publicity around hospitality spending has crippled many sectors of our industry, most recently during the Christmas period and with the onset of a tough summer trading period to come.

However, the industry lies in balance with the forthcoming London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games, and the value of sterling's decrease against the Dollar and Euro, presenting huge opportunities for our industry to incentivise inbound international business visits and events to these shores.

The US meetings and events industry, a sector our own market relies heavily upon, recently launched a nationwide campaign to 'Keep America Meeting'. This was a response to government restrictions introduced as part of the US governments Troubled Asset Relief Programme (TARP) which, together with a similar media witch hunt against meetings and events, has had a strangling effect on the industry.

As a show of solidarity to our friends in the US, as well as a pre-emptive campaign to serve and protect our own industry, VisitBritain, with the support of the major meetings and events industry associations and organisations, has launched 'Keep Britain Talking'. The campaign has been designed to raise awareness of the positive impact meetings and events can have on business, and so boost this vital industry.

Now more than ever the support of our government remains critical and would represent a well deserved endorsement of the campaign. We would also like to give you the opportunity to talk directly to this industry, and listen to ways in which government can further support UK meetings and events. Your involvement in these forums would again represent a much needed boost to the industry.

I look forward to your feedback and to meeting you in person to discuss these issues.

Kind regards

Joss Croft, Head of Business Visits & Events, VisitBritain