



Delegates gather in the auditorium at 30 Euston Square for Active London 2019

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## The show will go on: Covid-19 presents us with exciting new event opportunities



*At the beginning of March, 400 guests came together for the London Sport Awards. Two months later, the sector, and the country, is in a very different place. Events Manager Rachel Rowe looks at the move from physical to digital events and the potential opportunities it presents.*

## **Times are changing, and with that comes opportunities for growth and evolution.**

As Events Manager at London Sport, I'm embracing the change and looking at how we can redesign our [events programme](#) to keep our community connected at a time when staying in touch has never been more important.

In a matter of days, the shockwaves of covid-19 disrupted the norm for so many.

There are few industries unaffected and events are no exception. We have seen sporting events postponed like EURO 2020 and the London Marathon, and important political dates like the London mayoral election pushed back.

No organisation or event is immune.

The days of bringing people together, which we once took for granted, are beginning to feel like a distant memory.

2020 has changed the game when it comes to hosting events. Organisations and event managers, like myself, are being forced to look at a new, somewhat foreign menu of digital options, which leaves many of us facing the unknown.

But I have also found it has sparked the excitement of change, something new.

There is no denying that the digital event experience will be different: it is going to be difficult to replicate those 4pm networking drinks, the natural chatter at the tea and coffee station, or coincidentally striking up conversation with a new contact in a workshop.

As we continue to adapt to change and uncertain times, the importance of connection has never been more prevalent. The human interaction element is something we are going to have to work very hard at.

But, what it is important to recognise are the many benefits which come with the digital world; the environmental impact, accessibility, affordability, and the flexibility, to name just a few.

We are seeing a lot of the virtual event providers promoting a mission which is two-fold; to make events environmentally sustainable and accessible to all, and this is something I can certainly get onboard with.

This has prompted myself and the team at London Sport to rethink our calendar of events, from the [Connect Series](#) all the way through to [Active London](#), and look at creative ways to keep our partners and the wider sector engaged and informed.

We've already launched our '[Talking Covid-19 and Sport](#)' series alongside the Mayor of London's Sport Team, holding webinars with industry experts on [Finance and Funding](#) and being [Active at Home](#).

We're back to the drawing board and stripping back the layers of 'what has been', returning to the question of why people attend our events, and looked at how we can replicate the value, not the experience.

I think as we come out the other side of this covid-19 outbreak we will see that the quick pivot to digital events won't necessarily be considered a short-term fix.

Once the industry takes the leap to digital, we will quickly be presented with a new world of opportunity and many benefits, and there is a high possibility that will see the use of digital events become a permanent fixture.

So, in summary, the show will go on.

We are embracing the change and as we look forward to our next [Connect Series](#) and [Active London](#) events, we are excited to experiment with a different way of communicating with our community and we hope you will join us.

Keep an eye on [our website](#) and social media channels over the coming month to see what we have in store.

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**About London Sport**

London Sport aims to make London the most physically active city in the world. Supported by the Mayor of London and Sport England, our target is to get Londoners more physically active.

For more information on London Sport, visit [www.londonsport.org](http://www.londonsport.org)

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