



SCOTTISH
TOURISM
ALLIANCE

Your voice in tourism matters

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

17 May 2021

Dear First Minister

Following the Scottish Government's announcement on Friday that Glasgow will remain in level 3 restrictions for at least the next week, possibly longer according to Professor Leitch, my Chairman, Stephen Leckie and I, along with our colleagues at UKHospitality would like to request an urgent call with you to discuss the immediate concerns on behalf of tourism and hospitality businesses in Glasgow and the wider industry in other parts of Scotland.

While I imagine the decision to keep Glasgow at level 3 (with additional travel restrictions), amidst the growing prevalence of the so called Indian strain of the virus will have been a hugely challenging one for government in terms of balancing the public health crisis against the urgent need for businesses within all sectors to be trading as viably as possible, this has thrown a significant part of our industry and indeed the supply chain back into crisis mode and the mental health, resilience and commercial viability of the sector are of considerable concern.

The challenges we would like to discuss with you are as follows, with a view to there being an acknowledgement from the Scottish Government of the current situation and subsequent announcement of support for businesses which remain in level 3 and for the businesses outside of those areas which have been impacted by this decision:

1. Tourism and hospitality businesses in Glasgow had been preparing for entering level 2 restrictions today and had committed to staffing their businesses at a level to meet the huge demand for what would have been the welcome return of the hospitality experience that so many businesses and customers had looked forward to. Those staff will not be being brought in today as the demand is no longer there and would seem unlikely to be for the foreseeable future given the acceleration of the virus and the most likely continuation of these restrictions. The majority of those staff will be new and ineligible for furloughed support.

2. Businesses had procured at a level to meet the anticipated demand and number of bookings; much food and beverage will go to waste at considerable cost with the supply chain left in now left in limbo and unable to trade at the level so many had hoped to return to.
3. The travel ban in and out of Glasgow and has resulted in widespread cancellations for tourism businesses with bookings from those living within what are now level 3 areas.
4. The mental health of employers and indeed employees within the industry is now a great cause for concern. This was the last chance that many had to recoup some of the lost trade as a result of lockdown restrictions, significant investment has been made to reopen safely and give the public the confidence needed to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. Emotions are running very high now within the industry and feelings of resilience and hope are now turning to bitterness and anger which is being directed towards the Scottish Government.
5. The £750 which has been announced to support businesses affected by the requirement to remain in level 3 is some way from what would be required to stabilise those businesses over the coming days and potentially weeks and protect employment within the sector. Those businesses require significantly more financial support.
6. Timescale for updates – our industry now needs a timescale for when decisions will be taken in relation to reviewing the current situation in Glasgow and what the criteria for those decisions are.

As always, the Scottish Tourism Alliance and our counterparts at UKHospitality are committed to working closely with you, the Scottish Government and officials to protect public health at another key point within the crisis and ensure that the businesses which experience the greatest degree of hardship are the ones who receive the appropriate level of support.

I appreciate there will be challenges in getting time in your diary to have this discussion given the current situation and your commitments over the next few days, however we would greatly appreciate a half hour call this week and I know our industry will welcome an update from our organisations on the outcome.

Yours sincerely

Marc Crothall, Chief Executive – Scottish Tourism Alliance
Leon Thompson, Executive Director - UKHospitality Scotland