



SkyeConnect

Ag obair dha eilean ar gaoil

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Further to the First Minister's announcement on Wednesday 7th October, Skye hotels, guest houses and self-catering accommodation have seen a swathe of cancellations due to confusion and mixed messaging from the Scottish Government over travel restrictions. In addition, the restaurants and hotels have lost thousands of pounds in revenue as a result of cancellations due to restrictions on non-resident diners, hours of operating and the sale of alcohol.

This part of October is usually the last opportunity in the short Skye tourist season to build up cash reserves. This year those cash reserves are more important than ever and these last-minute changes to the capacity to open and build reserves are more important than ever. That opportunity has been taken away and risks dire consequences for all businesses affected. They remain on the brink of permanent closure.

To provide evidence to support this assertion, SkyeConnect surveyed businesses within the sector this week. The headlines make stark reading. 38% of respondents have lost more than £20,000 in October due to the new restrictions. The equates to an average of 30% of turnover for the month – the last chance to make money before the winter.

Two thirds of respondents have seen food sale fall by more than 20% and half of respondents have seen alcohol sales fall by 75%. This leads to one third of businesses expressing a lack of confidence in the ability of their business to survive and more than half saying the Scottish and UK Governments are not doing enough to support the sector.

The effect of the First Minister's announcement on 7TH October of new restrictions is a de facto lockdown on Skye.


Skye hospitality businesses have gone above and beyond to keep guests and our communities safe. The measures introduced mean that we have not seen any cases of COVID within our businesses and there has been no spread to the community. That protection and the extraordinarily strong response from the hotels, guest houses and self-catering premises has come at a significant cost, impacting on cash reserves needed to survive the winter.

The de facto lockdown, where our hospitality businesses are in theory operational but in practice unable to operate at anywhere near profitable capacity, also means we are ineligible for any compensation available to closed businesses from the UK Government financial support package commencing on 1st November.

Skye and the Highland hospitality businesses affected have been forgotten. They are invisible. Their fate over the winter looks to be desperate and mass redundancies in the hospitality sector are a certainty.

We request an urgent response and compensation for the effective closure of our businesses. The £40M currently on offer is a drop in the ocean compared to the losses our sector is suffering.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Tall', is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

The Chair and Directors of SkyeConnect