

To: Ms Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Scottish Government

Dear Ms Forbes,

Coronavirus support - £25,000 grant

Coronavirus is wreaking havoc within our communities and our industries. The Scottish Government has moved with commendable speed to announce a package of support for businesses in light of the unfolding health and economic emergency. Several measures are directly applicable to the retail, hospitality and leisure industries, including the 100% rates relief for the coming year, and we have and continue to be been fulsome in our praise for this.

It has however been brought to our attention by a number of firms over recent days that the proposed £25,000 grant scheme seems have become much more restricted that when it was first announced to Parliament on 18 March. In her remarks the Business Secretary, and indeed also the Rural Economy Secretary later in the debate, mentioned that the £25,000 grant would be applicable for each "property" operated by a business. This was re-stated in the accompanying press statement (18 March - '£2.2 billion for business'). Indeed, this was reaffirmed in a press release issued only yesterday (28 March – 'Supporting tourism through coronavirus'), in which the Rural Economy Secretary once again said it was "properties" that would each benefit.

However firms are telling us that when completing the applications the reality is that it is one grant per firm, rather than one grant for each property that a firm has. Many of these firms, who sustain hundreds of jobs in communities right across Scotland, have already take decisions in light of the 18 March announcement and package in order to combat the cash flow challenges that they face.

Given this, we would be most grateful for early clarity on the situation so that we can advise these businesses and our wider membership.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Wilkinson, Managing Director, Scottish Licensed Trade Association

David Lonsdale, Director, Scottish Retail Consortium

Marc Crothall, Chief Executive, Scottish Tourism Alliance

Willie Macleod, Executive Director – Scotland, UKHospitality

Joint Letter Forbes