

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Neil Doncaster
Chief Executive
SPFL
[redacted - personal information]

Your ref: N/A
3 April, 2020

Dear Mr Doncaster,

I know you and colleagues have been in regular contact with my officials over recent weeks about COVID-19. I hope the unprecedented support measures announced recently have been helpful to your members, providing some reassurance at this enormously difficult time for individuals and businesses.

As you are aware, the Scottish Government has laid the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 which – among other provisions – ban public gatherings of more than two people.

These regulations will only come to an end when Ministers can be satisfied that to do so would not risk life. As you will appreciate, the nature of the dynamic response to the threat posed by COVID-19 in Scotland and around the world means I am simply not in a position to advise when these restrictions will be lifted.

However, for guidance you will be aware we have put NHS Scotland on an emergency footing for at least 12 weeks until 10 June. In addition, the Chief Medical Officer Catherine Calderwood has publicly advised that expectations are that restrictions could remain in place for at least 13 weeks.

Restrictions would only be potentially lifted after this three month period if we can be confident viral spread and its impact have sufficiently slowed so we can save as many lives as possible. The key to this will be high compliance with the restrictions put in place in the regulations.

We welcome the full support of all individuals and businesses – including the SPFL and its member clubs – in adhering to the terms of these regulations and any directions given.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



Accredited
Until 2020



I appreciate that the legal restrictions on gatherings under the regulations, and the potential timescales that have been set out publicly, will have an impact on decisions for your organisation and its members as you plan for the future. Not least as I understand that – based on the specialist advice you received – it would be likely to take around six weeks of group training and conditioning before players are ready to safely play SPFL fixtures again. Clearly such activity cannot happen while the restrictions are in place.

We will, of course, continue to work closely with you, the Scottish FA and other stakeholders in football to minimise the potential impact of COVID-19 on our communities.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive of the Scottish FA.

JOE FITZPATRICK

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



Accredited
Until 2020

