

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted] @gmail.com>

Sent: 30 October 2020 11:39

To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

Subject: Restrictions

AO - [Redacted]

First Minister,

I wanted to write to you as a retailer in a small town centre. Business in general prior to the pandemic was challenging. Running a 'bricks 'n mortar' business in the modern world is not easy. However it is still possible to make it work, but only if the Xmas period each year is a success.

This is the time that makes the difference between making money for the year and not. I cannot over-state this enough. Making money from retail is difficult. Without the boost that the Xmas period brings, many businesses would quite simply not have sufficient funds to get through the year and prosodic enough income to make the thing worthwhile.

Any interruption to business between now and Xmas would be catastrophic. Once shops start to close, many will not open again and w risk the spectre of out village, town and city centres becoming empty, ugly and useless. So much effort has gone into trying to re-energise these centres over the last few years and this could all go quickly if this year descends into commercial chaos.

I fully understand the health crisis that we face and I do not take the virus lightly. However there is a balance to be struck between preserving life and living life. There are so many cruel health issues that affect our lives, but we have to keep pushing on where we can as the alternative is a life lived in constant fear. We need to protect the vulnerable where we can, encourage the sensible majority to adopt strong personal hygiene regimes (which they are) and also encourage people to try and live their lives as best as we can. Being stuck inside through a long dark Scottish winter with no outlet for social or sporting pastimes will lead to a depressed and unhappy public. I also think that the more draconian the restrictions, the more that people will start to push back against them. We need to make sure that people have some reasons for being out of their homes or I fear for the general mental health of us all.

Constantly being berated by government officials is becoming tiresome. Whilst I appreciate the severity of the pandemic, simply shutting down society is likely to yield as many problems as it solves. Saving lives now is fine, but how many are we condemning to future early deaths through other illnesses and ailments that are currently going un-noticed?

We will recover from this virus. What we have left at that point will be decided by those in power. It will be very sad if we have wrecked lives and livelihoods for many years to come by actions taken at this time.

Yours Faithfully

[Redacted]

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

—

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@icloud.com>

Sent: 04 November 2020 13:22

To: Central Enquiry Unit <CEU@gov.scot>

Subject: Dog grooming

Hi I'm a dog groomer based in bellshill Lanarkshire. I spoke to local council and trading standards and they weren't sure so thought I'd message direct. I work from my outbuilding in garden I closed last time as I do understand we are non essential. I just want to check what would happen if we go into tier 4 if dog groomers are to close again only open for welfare: last time everyone seemed to open which was frustrating as we weren't classed under anything and it seems to be causing a debate on all grooming forums. Can you confirm what would happen for dog groomers during lockdown this time. Thank you

[Redacted]

Sent from my iPhone

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

From: Jamie Hepburn MSP <Jamie.hepburn.msp@parliament.scot>
Sent: 30 October 2020 11:16
To: Scottish Ministers <Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot>
Subject: (Case Ref: JBJH16911) Covid-19 retail restrictions and the operation of betting shops

AO – [Redacted]

Good afternoon

I have been contacted by a constituent employed in a betting shop raising concerns about the near normal return to operation of the shop in apparent contravention of the Covid-19 restrictions. I have copied the text of my constituent's comments below to give the details of her concerns.

The crux of my constituent's concerns is that when the initial retail restrictions were lifted the betting shop was classified as a non-essential retail business and all hospitality elements of their service were removed. Following this, with the limited opening of hospitality, the betting company appear to have reintroduced elements of their service to customers which remain restricted in a hospitality setting.

As a matter of urgency I would be grateful for clarification on the use of betting shops in this manner and on their status within the context of the Covid-19 Strategic Framework.

Yours sincerely

Jamie Hepburn MSP
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth
Suite 1, Lennox House, Lennox Road, Cumbernauld, G67 1LL

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, and in line with Scottish Government advice, my constituency office is currently closed. However, I remain contactable directly by email at: jamie.hepburn.msp@parliament.scot.

My employer has carried out a risk assessment. From my understanding they are following the guidelines given.

My concern is that we seem to be continually re categorised throughout the pandemic. We were originally closed under hospitality. When we opened again we were categorised as retail but restrictions were in place to prevent people from gathering in the shops eg no live sports shown, no gaming machines on, furniture removed and no commentary. These restrictions were lifted when other hospitality opened.

This is our current position, gaming machines are on where customers often spend hours, furniture returned to the shop floor where people from different households gather for long periods of time bringing in food and drink from takeaway food outlets. We are open from 8.30am until 10pm, 14 hour shifts where we are continually at risk from this virus. I fail to understand why people from different households are not allowed to sit and eat or have coffee together in cafes but can bring food and drink into betting shops and sit for hours together with no masks. When pubs were opened music was not allowed and live sports could not be shown and yet betting shops remain open showing live sports and loud commentary where customers either sit together and watch and wander round cheering on football teams and shouting at horse racing events.

We are a very busy shop so we have restricted numbers in line with guidance but this mean we have long queues at busy times and a member of staff has to go on the shop floor where the majority of customers fail to wear masks and where we constantly get abuse from customers angry at being made to wait outside and unable to get their bets on in time.

We are not retail like any other retail, people come in not only to place bets but to gather and socialise

and that's what they continue to do. I am not saying my employer has not put in the advised measures, I feel those taking the decision to allow us to open as non essential retail are failing to understand that we are much more like a pub than a shop. People do not go to River island and sit in there with a coffee and sandwich chatting to other customers for hours.

We surely need to be categorised as either hospitality or leisure. As I've said we do not relish the financial impact of trying to live on 2 thirds of minimum wage but we feel our shops must certainly be an area where the risk of this virus spreading is very high but no one involved in track and trace will be aware as most of our customers refuse to complete track and trace. I would estimate that over 100 people per day stay in long enough to be given a track and trace form but on a good day 5 are returned to us completed.

We are frightened of the risk of contracting the virus from customers who seem to have no fear of the virus, not wearing masks or staying 2 metres apart despite us continually requesting they do.

Most importantly we feel let down by those making decisions failing to understand the nature of our business and customers. I have been a follower of the rules and a supporter of all the Scottish government decisions throughout the pandemic. I have been particularly careful as I help care for my 90 year old father, when restrictions were eased I went out on 3 occasions to restaurants, I wasn't allowed in without a mask and had to hand sanitiser in entry, my family were kept 2 metres away from other customers, if I went to the loo my mask had to go on and no background music was allowed, it felt very safe. So you must see how puzzled I feel that this service has been considered too unsafe to stay open when a betting shop where masks are rarely worn, people from numerous household sit together eating, drinking, socialising cheering in live sports with loud commentary and staff have no choice but to be among these customers to carry out our jobs.

Please can you find a way to raise this concern and ask that decision makers consider why it is safe for betting shops to remain open when all other social gatherings are so restricted.

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

-----Original Message-----

From: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>
Sent: 29 October 2020 07:47
To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: COVID Shopping Centre

AO - [Redacted]

[Redacted]
Performance Deputy Manager

-----Original Message-----

From: First Ministers Website Mailbox <FirstMinisterWebsite@gov.scot>
Sent: 29 October 2020 07:44
To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: COVID Shopping Centre

From:
[FirstMinisterWebsite@gov.scot][SMTP:FIRSTMINISTERWEBSITE@GOV.SCOT]
Sent: 29 October 2020 07:41:21
To: First Ministers Website Mailbox
Subject: COVID Shopping Centre
Auto forwarded by a Rule

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@yahoo.co.uk>
Subject: COVID Shopping Centre

Message Body:

I just want you to be aware that in the Gretna Gateway shopping centre people are coming to shop from all areas of the UK and especially Noticeable is the fact that a lot of them come from the higher tier areas! As I work in retail there I have been shocked by the attitude of some people who think it's ok to travel to shop when really it's not essential. I feel having non essential shopping centres open now is encouraging crowds. You would not believe the numbers that are walking around this area who just don't seem to care! Close non essential shops for two weeks to try and curb the spread of Covid as this is why the system is not working!!! Please consider this as numbers are increasing because people come here from all different areas then either spread it here or take it back to make their area worse! Why is this so difficult to understand? I am a 63 year old woman who works part time and takes all precautions but know I'm putting myself at risk every time I serve someone. Yesterday I had people in the shop from Manchester Liverpool Glasgow and Lanarkshire! Surely someone in government can see that Shopping centres are helping to spreading this disease.

--

This e-mail was sent from a contact form on the First Minister of Scotlands website (<https://firstminister.gov.scot>)

—
This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

—