



Monday 7th September 2020

Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister of Scotland
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH3 3DG

Dear First Minister,

[REDACTED], the Advertising Industry and exemption from quarantine for employees of commercials production.

[REDACTED] is the UK's largest production service company. We specialise in facilitating film, TV, advertising, music video and fashion shoots in all regions of the UK and are committed to unlocking the UK's potential for film and photo production. [REDACTED] was founded in 2006 by [REDACTED] when she identified a gap in the market for promoting Scotland as a destination for fashion shoots. [REDACTED] has grown year on year, expanding our offering to cover all sub-sections of the production industry, working on shoots in all four countries of the UK and opening two offices in England to support our offering from our well-established Scottish head office in the heart of Leith. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is highly recognised as a creative, innovative and sector-leading company that puts the UK, but particularly Scotland, on the map as a filming destination [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] were thrilled to hear about the proposed exemption of the production industry from self-isolation requirements and it was viewed as a much-needed kick-start to recovery of our international business. However, we were disappointed to learn that the exemption only applies to feature films and TV programmes and does not currently include commercial production. Though we are fortunate to have some domestic business, 60% of our business is typically international. Key markets for us include the US, France, Germany and Sweden to name a few. With many other production hubs around the world facing greater uncertainty than the UK does currently there is, more than ever, great international opportunity. However, at present, anyone traveling into the UK to work on a commercial production is not exempt from quarantine in the same way that those working on film or TV productions would be. This is causing [REDACTED] and all other production companies to lose business, with international commercial production either choosing to shoot elsewhere or postponing or cancelling the shoot entirely.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is a member of the Advertising Producers Association (APA) and closely aligned with their stance on applying the exemption of quarantine to commercial production. According to the APA, it is estimated that around £1 billion is spent on commercials production each year. They have also advised that The Advertising Association Deloitte's report on the value of advertising- https://www.adassoc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Advertising_Pays_Report.pdf - showed that for every £1 spent on advertising, £6 is generated for the economy. The report also demonstrates that the £16 billion spent on advertising by brands generated an additional £100 billion of GDP. Advertising has a key role to play in supporting the economy, now more than ever.

The grounds on which we advocate for the exemption for commercials production are predominantly economic however they are also cultural as, what is commonly accepted as the British film industry, comprises equally of film, TV and commercials. The three sub-sections of the industry feed and strengthen each other to support crew, production companies, studio spaces, locations and facility companies and all work hand in hand to promote the UK on a world stage, whether that be our creative talent, our incredible locations, our history or our exports. The impact of the advertising industry is far reaching but it is also important to note that one shoot alone could also employ around fifty to one hundred freelance crew, some of whom may not have had income since March, and the personal impact that changing the current guidelines to include commercial production could have cannot be underestimated.

The APA propose the exemption applies to Directors, Directors of Photography and actors coming to the UK for the purposes of a commercial. These roles are key to determining where a commercial is made and all other roles are local to the location of the production. The APA predict that this may result in roughly an additional 20 people entering the UK per week and are prepared to cap that number where required. The current guidelines for film and TV set out by the British Film Commission can be found here; <http://britishfilmcommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/British-Film-Commission-Working-Safely-During-COVID-19-in-Film-and-High-end-TV-Drama-Production-V.2.3-31-07-20.pdf>. The APA have advised that the only amendment that would need to be made is in regard to eligibility and suggest the following;

"To be considered eligible, qualifying individuals must be travelling to the UK to work on a commercials production defined as an advertisement for a brand being created by a UK commercials production company."

It has undeniably been a challenge to provide an overview of a complex and nuanced industry and issue in a succinct way. Our main aim is to convey that this issue has a simple solution that would make a huge impact to our business, the Scottish advertising industry, the promotion of Scotland and its exports to the world and the advertising industry across the UK as a whole. The impact on the businesses and crew, that form the foundation of why we can proudly and confidently say that the UK is one of the most respected hubs for production in the world, would be transformative.

Whilst there are so many important priorities for you to address at this moment, we thank you for taking the time to learn of our current challenge and we hope you agree that there is a simple, effective and quick solution. We would be happy to discuss this in greater detail or provide further information as required. We are committed to encouraging debate and action on this issue for the future of our employees, our business, our industry and for the economy.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]