



Campaign for Pubs

Promote, Support and Protect Pubs

Ivan McKee MSP
Minister for Trade, Innovation and Public Finance
Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

17th June 2021

Dear Ivan,

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and respond to it. I recognise that this is a difficult time for everyone and do appreciate the efforts that the Scottish Government has made to date to support hospitality.

Saying that, I am disappointed with your response regarding table service. It does seem a little unfair to cite poor compliance by some establishments as the reason for the continuation of table service. Surely if the Scottish Government puts regulations in place, they have an obligation to enforce them? In addition, it is highly unlikely that premises not complying with distancing will be complying with compulsory table service. Indeed, I know of many pubs where customers are able to order and collect drinks at the bar. It really isn't fair that due to poor compliance and lack of enforcement, establishments that are following the rules are suffering. We now have a very uneven playing field in hospitality where businesses are at a disadvantage because they are following the rules and others aren't.

Returning to the subject of table service I would like to draw your attention to Relevant considerations to deciding whether measures are reasonable contained within Coronavirus (COVID-19): tourism and hospitality sector - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

I have taken the time to consider these and would wish to make the following points using these considerations.

- the nature of the work – are the measures practical, or would they so undermine the delivery of the service or undertaking of the business that they would be counterproductive?

In wet sales pubs table service is not practical. These premises are not set up or staffed to deliver table service. As a result, customers often have to wait longer than they are happy with for a drink resulting in unnecessary friction. It also makes it very difficult to judge levels of drunkenness when customers come in wearing a mask and are immediately seated. Interaction at the bar when ordering is a vital tool in a responsibly run pub.

- can measures be put in place without compromising the health and safety of others? If measures would increase the health and safety risk, these would most likely not be reasonable measures.

Table service is much more physically and emotionally demanding than bar service. This is not the job that staff were hired to do. Especially for older staff it is physically demanding carrying trays of drinks to outside drinking areas. Already the industry is seeing cases of sickness and depression amongst staff who are struggling with a demanding and unrewarding job. Furthermore, staff are at more risk delivering trays of drinks to tables of customers not wearing masks than they would be taking orders and delivering drinks from behind a screen when both staff and customers are wearing masks.

Campaign for Pubs, The Volunteer Arms, 5 Watson Street, Holgate, York YO24 4BH

Email: campaign@campaignforpubs.org.uk Twitter: [@campaignforpubs](https://twitter.com/campaignforpubs) Facebook: [@campaignforpubs](https://www.facebook.com/campaignforpubs) Instagram: [@campaignforpubs](https://www.instagram.com/campaignforpubs)

Campaign for Pubs Ltd Registered company number 12637917 Registered in England and Wales

- measures should command staff's confidence that due consideration has been given to the level of risk that they face. Employers may wish to introduce mechanisms to receive feedback on the measures that they have introduced

Many staff are not comfortable with carrying trays full of drinks to outside areas often up and down steps. There is an increased risk of trips and falls when staff under pressure are carrying overloaded trays. The lack of confidence in the consideration current measures give to staff wellbeing is easily evidenced by the current difficulties the industry is facing in recruiting and retaining staff.

- cost – is the cost of the measure proportionate to the number of people whose risk is reduced by the measure?

Given that table service costs twice as much to deliver to half the customers there is no way it can be seen as a viable business model. Capacity is vastly reduced and there is ample space for customers to order at the bar and still maintain social distancing. In a properly run venue there would be no added risk to customers and less risk to staff. The cost here far outweighs the negligible benefits and as the Scottish Government have made no financial contribution towards the cost of this measure it is not reasonable to ask businesses to continue with it.

Given these considerations I would have to conclude that compulsory table service is not a reasonable measure and unless the Scottish Government wishes to contribute to the financial burden it creates there is no justification for continuing with it.

I also note, with concern, speculation that the Scottish Government may delay the removal of restrictions. This would make the situation for Scottish publicans even more difficult, so I and we urge you to consider the removal of table service – in light of the Government's own guidance – as well as announcing further support for pubs, for as long as restrictions remain in place.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Morag Douglas
Campaign for Pubs Spokesperson for Scotland
Licensee, The Star, Burntisland