



# Campaign for Pubs

Promote, Support and Protect Pubs

Nicola Sturgeon  
First Minister  
Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

19<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear First Minister,

## **Vaccine passports and the significant impact on community pubs**

We am writing to ask you to consider some points while making your forthcoming decision on the introduction of vaccine passports in hospitality, something that you are aware is a huge concern to many of Scotland's pubs and publicans, after what has already been a hugely difficult time.

Very often decisions seem to be made that only take into account large city and town centre pubs and forget small community wet led pubs. These smaller venues are a lifeline for the older members of the community who would have very little social contact otherwise. The pub is where they meet friends, get help and advice, and brighten up what might otherwise be a very lonely existence. Moreover it is the place they would be missed if they didn't turn up for a couple of days. These people are at great risk from depression and loneliness if they are deprived of their only social contact.

Sadly, this is also the demographic with the least access to technology and obtaining a covid passport may be simply not possible for a lot of them. As a result, they will be unable to access the social contact that is a lifeline for many and the consequences will be severely detrimental to their health and wellbeing.

There is no doubt that it is the small community pubs that have borne the heaviest burden throughout the pandemic. Apart from the obvious stress of not trading for long periods of time, some of the reopening restrictions were much more onerous than in larger premises. Social distancing and all customers being seated cut the capacity of small premises drastically. Table service placed a personal and financial burden on wet led premises that had never been set up to deliver it and two hour time slots restricted the time regular customers could stay for. In addition, there was the problem that adherence to regulations was not being checked and a two-tier system was created, those that suffered physically, emotionally and financially from adhering to the rules and those that got away with blatantly disregarding them.

If Covid passports are to be required in smaller pubs, it will take more time to check them in premises that have never had the need for door staff. This will obviously incur more cost at a time when people are still struggling to recover. In addition, refusing regular customers entry because they don't have a Covid passport for whatever reason, will cause bad feeling and hostilities which in a small community, will have a long-term negative impact on businesses. Invariably as before some premises will have a much more cavalier attitude than others toward enforcement which will again create an uneven playing field in which those that are following the rules are unfairly penalised. Overall, we do not believe that vaccine passports are necessary and do not believe they should be introduced, but if the Scottish Government is to introduce them, then it must at least understand and seek to ameliorate the situation pubs, especially smaller community pubs, would be put in.

Although most restrictions have now been lifted, the sector is still under great pressure due to staff shortages, stock shortages and rising costs across the board. If another burden was to be placed on it at this time when people are struggling to recover, I feel many would simply not survive. As a result many

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more communities will lose the invaluable asset that is their local pub. So we implore you to understand this and factor into your decision making, the reality of the impact on pubs, publicans and communities.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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



Greg Mulholland  
Campaign Director, Campaign for Pubs

cc Ivan McKee, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise