



Kate Forbes MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrews House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG.

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Dear Ms Forbes,

I write to you in my capacity as Chairman of the National Outdoor Events Association Scotland, an organisation that represents both organisers and the supply chain of outdoor events; from sporting competitions, county and agricultural shows, to concerts, live events, outdoor theatre and festivals.

I was fortunate to join a meeting with yourself and the Scottish Tourism Alliance on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021, where the plight of the industry was discussed. One of the areas we addressed was the need for events companies to be recognised as hospitality businesses and benefit from the business rates relief.

I wanted to underline just how much suffering there is within the industry right now; many event suppliers have not received revenue for almost two years, the Scottish government's response has been slow and whilst there are now a few grants available sadly woefully inadequate, and we have members, who once ran successful SME companies now using food banks to feed their families. This is a very proud industry, rightfully the envy of the world, that produces some of the most iconic events in the Scottish Calendar. For it to survive and live again to produce these events safely and professionally, it needs all the help it can get.

This business rate relief is crucial. It allows these events businesses to retain working capital that it can then use to pay deposits to other event suppliers and kick start the mini economies that surround major events. We have seen how successful this policy has been in hospitality, an industry that events works closely with and which shares a similar fate.

There are many further arguments on why this move can only be a positive one for the government to take and I'd be happy to explain further both its positive effects, and those companies that will most benefit from it.



The minutes from the STA meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> were produced today and quotes your reply to my question as to why the events industry didn't receive business rates relief you responded "The expectation would have been that events would fall under the hospitality category in terms of rate relief".

I would suspect that there are at least 100 event based companies that were told by their local authority that "events were not on the list of business supplied to them by the Scottish Government". As you can imagine, these event companies are currently paying business rates with no relief and non in the new financial year which hospitality will receive, even though they have actually operated during the pandemic. Granted it has be in between various lock downs, but the event industry hasn't operated since March 2020.

Please can you and your department have a look at this it would be most welcome (and fair to the industry) if we were classified as hospitality, allowing event companies to be refunded business rates paid in 2020/2021 and gain relief in 2021/2022?

If myself or my office can be of any help, please do let me know and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind sincerely,

**Tom Clements** Dip.ESM  
Chairman NOEA Scotland

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