

PE1848/E

Petitioner submission of 11 January 2021

In response to the Scottish Government's Statement:

'which includes measures across a wide number of settings and provides a comprehensive approach to reducing infection rates and suppressing the spread of the virus. Our approach and principles remain as set out in our Framework for Decision Making, based on clinical evidence, expert advice, and a balanced assessment of the risks. While we currently have no plans to allow pool and snooker halls to reopen outside of tiers 0 and 1, we keep the content of the Strategic Framework under regular review.'

In my previous statement I have fully responded to the Government's approach and principles based on clinical evidence, expert advice and a balanced assessment of the risks.

Other than any new evidence to be produced, it would be difficult to argue that the playing of snooker (a non-contact indoor National Governing Body sport) and their respective venues is any less safe than non-contact indoor sports placed in Tier 3 or any hospitality in Tier 3.

Poor ventilation, physical distancing difficult to maintain, keeping surfaces clean, common uses of equipment, regulating movement, prolonged periods indoors, and pinch points. This has all been covered and answered in a fair and balanced way. We believe we are as safe as any Tier 3 sport or hospitality.

It's fair to say that everything should be done that is necessary to fight COVID-19 and save lives. It would also be fair to say that no business or sport should be unnecessarily disadvantaged either, should there be a solution.

Whenever we get back to tier 3 there is a lot of members of the community that don't want to go to pubs and can't afford restaurants every week, however they do want to get back to some kind of socialising for their health and wellbeing and within the short time we were open our customers appreciated the safety that snooker venues provided for their first steps back into the community.

I've tried to keep away from the financial implications for the snooker/pool venue industry for the fear of only sounding self-interested. However, when tier 3 ever opens again (3-6 months?) if our industry was left in tier 1 at least a further 3-6 months then I fear a complete closure of the venues. I think we should be looking for a solution for this industry to stay open not excuses to close. Approximately 2000 jobs are in this decision. If you feel that a good case has been put forward to open in tier 3 then please support us by opening in tier 3 and save 2000 jobs. The future of this sport is in your hands.