

PE1848/F

Minister for Public Health and Sport submission of 17 February 2021

Thank you for your letter of 15 January 2021 to Jeane Freeman MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, about Petition [PE1848: Allow snooker and pool venues to open in more tiers](#). I am replying as Minister responsible for sport.

As the Committee is aware from previous correspondence from the Scottish Government, decisions on what sectors and activities to re-open on our route out of lockdown are guided by the principles set out in our Framework for Decision Making. Proposals are technically assessed using the best available evidence and analysis of their potential benefits and harms to health, the economy, and broader society to minimise overall harm and ensure transmission of the virus continues to be suppressed. This assessment process includes oversight of the assessed health risks in different settings by the Chief Medical Officer and input from the other chief clinicians as appropriate.

However, I note the points made at the Committee meeting on 13 January, particularly in relation to the comparison with other non-contact sports and the further information provided on the operation of snooker and pool halls. We will look to ensure these points are considered in a further review of the Strategic Framework.

In relation to the issues raised around adequate financial support, we are acutely aware of the financial pressures which restrictions are placing on organisations. That is why, since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, the Scottish Government has worked closely with the UK Government and private and public sector partners to develop a range of support mechanisms for businesses. Information on all available support for businesses can be found on [Find Business Support](#). The website is regularly updated with information on any new support packages or changes to existing ones. Businesses that are required to close by law, or significantly change operations due to COVID-19 restrictions may be eligible for grant funding through the Strategic Business Framework Fund.

In addition, in conjunction with **sportscotland**, we have worked closely with all partners to understand their specific circumstances in supporting community sport to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. We are helping sporting organisations and groups to access the various funding streams available. More information can be found at: <https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/support-for-clubs-and-community-sport-organisations/>.

I hope the Committee are reassured that we will consider these points further and that we want the all sectors, including snooker and pool halls, to open as soon as it is possible to do so.