

20th September 2021

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

Our ref: SCC/FM/20092021

Dear Nicola,

International Travel Restrictions

The Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) Network have been working closely with the Scottish Government and Scotland's tourism, aviation, and international travel sectors to support the full re-opening of Scotland's airports and the return of safe domestic and international air travel for those travelling in and out of Scotland for business and leisure purposes.

Throughout this process, SCC have always maintained that a harmonised 4-nations approach to international travel is essential to support the sectors affected and allow them to recover in Scotland at the same pace as elsewhere in the UK.

Ultimately, we hoped that a sequenced reduction of border restrictions as levels of infections reduce would lead to further reductions on testing requirements and eventually remove all burdensome quarantine restrictions.

The recent announcement by the Scottish Government to extend *Day 2 PCR testing* requirements on double vaccinated international travellers has been met with major dismay from the business community, particularly as other parts of the UK will remove this requirement. There is no doubt that this will negatively impact on Scotland's economy, jobs and delay the sector's recovery from the pandemic.

This decision risks a perception that Scotland is uncompetitive and unattractive as a destination to visit and do trade with.

International travel to and from Scotland will still be available from other UK airports and passengers who travel from England will be able avoid expensive tests and save around £100 per person according to Edinburgh Airport, which will simply take money directly out of Scotland's economy harming our airline connectivity and capacity.

We know that Scotland's airports and the aviation industry are essential parts of the national economic jigsaw, and without additional support and a strategy to get the sector going again, there remains a gaping hole in the centre of the Scottish economic picture, compounded by this decision on testing requirements.

The Scottish Government have acknowledged that tourism and international travel are two of Scotland's "*most important industries, helping to create wealth and jobs and build upon our strong international reputation*" and re-opening Scotland in a safe and secure way must be a priority to help boost our overall economic recovery, however, the testing regime that remains in force, is out of step with our domestic partners and international competitors and fails to recognise this.

SCC therefore are requesting an urgent meeting with Ministers and senior officials to discuss the impact of this decision and how it can be rectified to support Scotland's businesses and economic recovery.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Liz Cameron OBE
Director & Chief Executive
Scottish Chambers of Commerce

CC:

Kate Forbes MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy

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