

# Murray urges government to do the right thing by our pubs

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson made an announcement about social distancing yesterday which did not go as far as shutting pubs and restaurants. As a result the businesses cannot make insurance claims.

Labour MP Ian Murray has urged the UK Government to ensure that these businesses do not miss out on compensation.

Mr Murray, who ran his own pubs in Scotland before entering Parliament, has written to BEIS Secretary Alok Sharma to outline widespread concerns in the industry.

It has been reported that the Association of British Insurers has warned that standard business interruption cover – which majority of firms purchase – does not include forced closure by authorities, and Mr Murray will also raise this with the insurance profession and urge firms to show leniency.

Mr Murray has also said the government must support workers in the sector, many of whom are on zero-hour contracts.

He has welcomed the government's commitment to an economic rescue package, but said there should also be a community-led approach and has encouraged a conversation about ideas such as purchasing gift vouchers to help businesses with the cash flow crisis.

In his letter, MP for Edinburgh South Ian Murray wrote: "I know from my own experience that the overwhelming majority of independent businesses do not have large cash reserves and

many only survive week-to-week.

“Their cash flow problem isn’t one that’s going to be felt in months – it is likely to be felt within days.

“Following the government’s advice, many establishments which have served their communities for decades will simply close and never be able to re-open.

“This will result in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, destroying livelihoods, isolating communities, and leading to a wider negative impact on the economy.

“The impact on staff who are on zero or short hours contracts, hospitality staff, freelancers and associated businesses is considerable.

“If the government is asking businesses to support their staff over the period, then the government has to support them to do so. Urgent action is needed.

“I am therefore calling on the UK Government to do the right thing by Britain’s small businessowners and formally order the closure of pubs, clubs, cafés and restaurants to ensure they can make a compensation claim from their insurance supplier.”

Mr Murray added:“Even with formal closures, compensation may depend on the type of insurance purchased.

“I urge insurance firms to show leniency in these unprecedented times, and help ensure the survival of businesses on which the industry relies.”



Kays Bar in Jamaica Street Lane. Photo: Martin P. McAdam  
[www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)