

Scottish hospitality calls for urgent support #SaveOurJobs

A campaign has begun today, backed by some of the top names in Scottish hospitality to demand support from the UK and Scottish Governments.

Those behind the move hope to safeguard up to 100,000 jobs before the national furlough scheme finished on 31 October 2020.

Tom Kitchin, Nic Wood of pub group Signature Group, James Thomson of Prestonfield and The Witchery, Carina Contini and Crerar Hotels group are heading up the campaign asking for government support before it's too late.

Hospitality workers are getting their message across with Save Our Jobs selfies using the hashtags #SaveOurJobs and #ScottishHospitality.



Support comes from all over the country with hoteliers, restaurateurs, publicans and café owners who are all combining their efforts to raise awareness of the crisis which the hospitality industry is facing. It is not just the restaurants themselves as they are at the end of a long supply chain, so jobs are at risk in Scottish food and drink producers too.

The hospitality industry demands more clarity from The

Scottish Government on who their funding will benefit, but also simply asks for more funding as well as evidence based solutions to keeping staff and customers safe while keeping outlets open.

Michelin star restaurateur and owner of Edinburgh's The Kitchin, Tom Kitchin said: "We're in really challenging times as an industry and now is the time to act. The impact this situation is having not just on Scottish hospitality but also on our supply chain is enormous. I was speaking to a supplier yesterday and he was in tears. Many producers and even members of our team are in great stress and I have serious concerns for their health and well-being if this carries on. Everyone linked to our industry is affected by the restrictions and curfews and hospitality and tourism being such important corner stones of the economy cannot be wiped out.

"Our industry is in a real need of help, especially having only just partly recovered from the first lockdown. We have worked so hard to keep our guests and diners safe in hospitality settings, taking all safety precautions needed to remain safe while enjoying good food and drink. Eliminating the risks of the virus is obviously our greatest concern, but there need to be a balance. For the hospitality future of Scotland."

Carina Contini is Owner of Contini George Street, Edinburgh; Cannonball Restaurant & Bar, Castlehill, Edinburgh; and The Scottish Cafe & Restaurant – located at the gardens entrance of the Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh. She said:

"This virus has created a health and social imbalance. Our elderly have suffered hugely in both loss of their community and their well-being. The youth have suffered socially with their learning and friendships being hit the hardest.

"But the business imbalance affecting hospitality today which is being hit so much harder than many other professions will

cause an even greater long term harm.

“Our Hospitality teams, made up of all ages are losing their livelihoods. Our suppliers are being hugely affected. Supermarkets are not picking up the smaller artisans suppliers that feed the independent hospitality market. Our high streets are losing their heart and soul as meeting places for family, friends and businesses.

“Our youth are losing out on the part-time jobs we have always provided for all future carriers from accountants to ballerinas.

“Our family businesses are losing their life-long investments. We are one of the largest contributors to all sectors of our community and economy. We need support to be able to fuel the nation’s recovery. Don’t allow all this good to be lost. It will be a much harder medicine to swallow than any virus.”

James Thomson, Owner of Edinburgh’s Prestonfield House and The Witchery said: “Earlier this year I made the incredibly difficult decision to close The Tower in Edinburgh which I had had the pleasure to operate for 22 years. Due to the impact of Covid-19, we had to permanently close our doors which absolutely broke my heart. This resulted in a number of unavoidable redundancies which was a huge blow to all of us and the many suppliers and their staff whom we supported. I’m now very concerned that without adequate support, many hospitality venues will face the same future.

“For years hospitality has faced a shortage of staff and just before the pandemic we were in a very positive position of having some exceptional members of staff . To date we have already lost 52 loyal staff and have another 80 events staff who have been forced to live on furloughed pay since March due to forced closure of events. I now fear losing many more of them and going right back to square one when happier days return.”

Nic Wood, Owner of Scotland's leading pub, bar and restaurant collection, Signature Group said: "We hope this campaign will drive awareness to the plight of our young workforce as their employment prospects dwindle. We care about every member of our team and to not be able to save every job causes us a huge amount of distress. With the appropriate measures, hospitality can be a covid secure environment so we want to press that with the right support, the industry can reopen safely, thus protecting jobs."

To show your support for the 'Save Our Jobs' campaign, share your thoughts and photos on social media using the hashtag #SaveOurJobs and #ScottishHospitality.

Many business owners are worried that they are running out of time to save vital jobs, many of which are held by people aged between 16 and 24 years old. People aged between 16 to 24 years old currently make up 50% of the hospitality workforce in Scotland, however, since February, youth unemployment has risen from 6.1% to 14.5% in Scotland.



Tom Kitchin, James Thomson, Carina Contini and Nic Wood