

Scottish Government urged to signal that Scottish hospitality is “open for business”

The head of a major hospitality business in Edinburgh has called on The Scottish Government to urgently rethink its approach and match the “fairer” guidance in place south of the border.

Scott Mitchell, Managing Director of Surgeons’ Quarter, has revealed that the business, which runs Edinburgh’s largest Independent hotel as well as a major conference and events setting, lost £225,000 in sales due to cancellations of Christmas and Hogmanay events.

The organisation, which is the commercial arm of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd), received just 3% of that back in government support – and continues to lose out on business tourism bookings to other venues in England.

On Tuesday, Scotland’s First Minister did not change the guidance on indoor hospitality settings to allow for larger gatherings, despite pressure from the beleaguered industry.

Scott Mitchell said: “While we welcome the apparent mindset shift towards gearing up for living with the pandemic, the government simply isn’t doing enough to save hospitality.

“The great Christmas party and Hogmanay cancellation was catastrophic, but the First Minister had an opportunity today to spell out the point in time that firms could be encouraged to rebook. I look forward to seeing the Scottish Government leading by example and starting to place bookings for their deferred festive events.

“Instead, she is leaving the sector with support measures that are not fit for purpose, and arbitrary restrictions that will result in countless lost jobs and livelihoods. The support we are receiving equates to roughly 3% of the sales we have lost, which are in excess of £225,000.

“It would be so helpful if we could have the same approach across the UK to have a level playing field, currently we are seeing events and hotel enquiries moving south of the border where the sector can operate without restrictions.”

Prior to the new restrictions and the surge in the Omicron variant, Ten Hill Place, the hotel operated by Surgeons' Quarter, had been set for its busiest December in more than a decade.

Surgeons' Quarter promotes, sells and manages all commercial activities held within the RCSEd campus. All profits support the charitable aims of the College which are education, assessment and advancement in surgical standards worldwide.

For more information on events, conferences and meeting space at Surgeons Quarter visit: <https://www.surgeonsquarter.com/conferences-meetings/>

International guests can book directly by visiting Surgeons Quarter's own travel agency at: <https://www.sqtravel.co.uk/>



Surgeons Quarter, Scott Mitchell – Managing Director