



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ken Skates AM
Minister for Economy
Welsh Government
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

August 2020

Dear Ken

2-metre social distancing rule in Wales

I am writing to you on behalf of a number of businesses in my constituency, predominantly in the hospitality sector.

Last week I visited many Wrexham restaurants, pubs and cafes, and spoke to them about their success with the UK Government's 'Eat Out to Help Out' Scheme. I also met with the tourism partnership chair on behalf of 50+ business in Wrexham from the tourism, hospitality and leisure sector.

The overwhelming message to come out of the meetings was that the Welsh Government's 2-metre social distancing rule is a major hinderance to businesses recovery and is blocking them from success.

The 2- metre rule is a problem for a number of reasons:

1. It restricts the number of customers that can be in a pub, restaurant, bar or café. Some are small venues and many owners have explained to me that without reducing the social distancing requirement to 1 metre to increase capacity, it would not be financially viable to reopen because the running costs would supersede the revenue raised.
2. Wrexham businesses are losing out to Chester's hospitality sector. Businesses in Wrexham have expressed extreme frustration at the fact that customers can pop over the border to England for a meal in a restaurant that has more capacity, due to a 1-metre-plus rule set by the UK Government. A disparity in the guidance between England and Wales means that, once again, Wrexham will lose out.

Aligning Welsh guidance with UK Government guidance would allow the hospitality sector in Wales to survive. Businesses cannot reopen and make a profit when they have to abide by an arbitrary 2-metre rule. At the moment, the sector is being strangled by a Welsh Government decision, which is hard to understand when businesses just across the border in England can work to a 1-metre-plus rule.

Therefore, I respectfully urge you to reassess the 2-metre rule in Wales, to help our businesses recover from this unprecedented pandemic.

Yours ever

Sarah Atherton MP
Member of Parliament for Wrexham