

## **PE1848/A**

Petitioner submission of 8 January 2020

The SPICe briefing is based on the [Strategic Framework: Business Closures: Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment \(BRIA\)](#) which assessed snooker/pool venues based on:

- the mix and number of people present,
- the amount of time individuals are likely to spend there,
- the ability to maintain 2m distancing,
- the likelihood of pinch points where people might gather (e.g. toilets, entrances and exits),
- the standard and type of ventilation
- the likelihood of people touching surfaces and goods
- the potential for significant aerosol projection activity

I dispute the assessment that has been made in the BRIA, and highlighted in the SPICe briefing.

Good mechanical ventilation is in place in all premises licenced venues as part of our licence requirements, we do not need to rely on a member of staff to open a window!

Physical distancing is also easy to maintain as there is a snooker/pool table between both players of 6ft to 12ft.

The average time spent in a snooker venue is 1 – 2 hours, similar or less than, bingo, bowling, restaurant, cinema, indoor sports, gyms, personal care & public transport (buses, trams, planes, trains & automobiles)

With regard to pinch points at toilets; keeping surfaces and equipment clean, these issues are already identified with control measures to mitigate the risks are part of our risk assessment for re-opening as any other public premises throughout the country; and in the case of surfaces and equipment, approved by each licencing board

Snooker/pool halls are not attended by many people due to the physical space created by the tables (352 square feet of space for two players playing snooker). Periods of time has been covered and is no more than similar venues that are open in tier 3. Consideration of inherent risks are similar, if not considerably less than many hospitality venues or non-contact indoor sports (Snooker is a non-contact official NGB sport under the regulations of Sportscotland) in tier 3. We believe that snooker/pool is a far safer than any hospitality that is in level 3 and comparable if not better than non-contact indoor sports or gyms.

I note that the potential for significant aerosol projection activity has not been covered by SPICe. I would like to add that unlike any sport I know, snooker and pool were asked to wear a mask whilst at the table playing and when not playing, the standard hospitality rules would apply. I think that the answers that have been provided are a true and fair reflection where Snooker & Pool venues are in comparison to Non-contact indoor sports & hospitality in tier 3. We believe that's where we should be.

My background and experience is in hospitality and is why I believe that I can give an informed and fair reflection on where snooker/pool venues can be safely placed in the tier system should I be consulted.

I have played snooker for 40+ years, I have been a snooker club owner for over 30 years, at this very challenging time I am in the unfortunate position of also being a bar owner and a café owner! I also sit on the board of Scottish Snooker NGB for some 10 years now.

I think Snooker venues as a sport facility provider should allow the playing of snooker in tier 3 as all non-contact indoor sports in Scotland are available in tier 3, except snooker. We are as safe as any of them with the advantage of playing our sport whilst wearing a mask. Snooker is a very low heart rate sport so there is less risk of heavy breathing or aerosol projection. The 'Quiet Please' etiquette with snooker also lowers the chances of aerosol projection. As the only non-contact indoor sport not to be included in tier 3 we believe that this is discrimination, imagine if all places of worship were open in tier 3 but one excluded for no real reason then there would be an uproar! So why treat us differently?

I think that Snooker venues as hospitality providers (sell alcohol under a premises licence) should open in tier 3 as many Snooker venues have a licenced bar (not all) & eating areas. We are regulated under a premises licence and follow all the guidance afforded to Bars, cafes & restaurants under the covid guidelines and risk assessment.

In my opinion and experience I believe the playing of snooker (mainly played in a separate area from the bar/lounge) is far safer than any bar, restaurant or café due to the social distancing & masks worn. Whilst playing snooker there are less toilet visits as the main event is playing snooker & not drinking or eating! As the owner of a Snooker venue, a bar and a café at the age of 55 and overweight! I feel safer in the Snooker venue than the bar or café, many of our snooker customers are over the age of 50 and have said when we were open briefly that they felt safer in the Snooker club and would not visit bars until a vaccine was found.

It seems that since the start of COVID-19 snooker venues have been forgotten about as a sport and it is confusing to where we fit in as hospitality. I can understand this confusion to people who do not play the sport. However, the people that play (ages from 9 to 90) it can be their only social life or their little bit of exercise at an elderly age. I urge you to read the comments in the petition and notice the large amount that relate to snooker as positive for their mental health and wellbeing as reported in the SPICe document.

I think Snooker/pool venues could sit safely in tier 3 under the regulations of cafes as per our premises licence & non-contact indoor sports as our sport. Tier 3, no alcohol, food and soft drink only & the playing of snooker under non-contact indoor sport. Snooker/pool venues are facing extinction, some already are closed for good. Common sense would save many more from closure if in tier 3 and would provide a massive boost to the mental health and wellbeing of the people (ages 9 to 90) who play this wonderful sport.