



By email

7<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Colleague,

Firstly I would like to thank you for supporting our national efforts to manufacture and distribute key supplies during this unprecedented and challenging time.

The Scottish Government have been actively engaging with key stakeholders across the food and drink sector to ensure continuation of supply chain across all corners of Scotland, including our remote, rural and island communities.

I recognise there has been acute pressure exerted on the retail sector due to increased consumer demand and I thank you for helping them keep stocks on the shelves. Servicing the retail industry is, of course, an important element of the food supply chain, however concerns have been raised with me about equity of supply in relation to the wholesale sector.

The wholesale sector is a vital element of the supply chain in Scotland. This is particularly true of our remote, rural and island communities who are heavily reliant on the convenience sector. In addition to the convenience sector wholesalers also service the needs of care homes and hospitals. It is therefore imperative that these supplies continue.

I understand that many retailers are now saying that after the initial surge in purchasing in their sector they are now getting back to normal. On that basis, I would therefore ask that you would now give assurances that the convenience sector will continue to be catered for during these difficult times.

I understand that due to Covid-19 there are pressures on networks which has resulted in changes to distribution models to maximise efficiencies. I would ask that smaller wholesalers are not disadvantaged due to their scale. If larger minimum orders are required to make the consignment viable I ask that you work with wholesalers to find a way forward, which may include delivering consolidated loads to more than one customer.



I would encourage you to main your positive dialogue with the wholesale sector and work with them on these and other issues.

I would very much welcome your thoughts in response to these comments. I would be more than happy to engage further if that would be helpful. In the first instance, I would be grateful if you could contact [Caroline.Burgess@gov.scot](mailto:Caroline.Burgess@gov.scot).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fergus Ewing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop under the 'F' and 'E'.

**FERGUS EWING**

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Accredited  
Until 2020

