**ASSC SUBMISSION TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER**

**Introduction**

Founded in 1978, the Association of Scotland’s Self-Caterers (ASSC) is the leading source of knowledge on short-term letting and holiday homes in Scotland. The ASSC is the only trade body representing the interests of the traditional self-catering sector. It has more than 650 Members, operating in excess of 7,000 self-catering properties throughout Scotland, from city centre apartments, to rural cottages, to lodges and chalets, to castles. The ASSC commits its members to maintaining the principles of “quality, integrity, cleanliness, comfort, courtesy and efficiency” and to offering visitors to Scotland consistently high standards within their self-catering properties

The ASSC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for business representative organisation members’ feedback from the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser. We provide our comments from the perspective of a key stakeholder in Scotland’s tourism industry – the self-catering sector provides an annual £723m boost to the Scottish economy – and have highlighted some of our survey results concerning eligibility and access to the various packages of economic support from the Scottish and UK Governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**ASSC Response**

In response to this call for evidence, the ASSC conducted a survey to gauge just how many self-catering operators had benefited from business grant support in Scotland. **This demonstrated that over one-third (34%) of the respondents had not received any financial support from the Scottish Government**.[[1]](#footnote-1) The fact that such a large proportion of self-catering operators have not benefitted from Scottish Government support, months after it was first announced and when self-catering units were instructed to close, is a major concern given the importance of tourism to the Scottish economy.

Prior to the aforesaid survey from 24th June 2020, the ASSC conducted a number of sectoral surveys to assess the level of take-up and access to business support in Scotland. **The online surveys elicited 3,777 responses** from both ASSC members and non-ASSC members alike, in each of the 32 local authorities.

The week 2, one question, survey showed that 68% of self-caterers had not received any financial support.

While there was some welcome movement in terms of business grant applications being approved since in subsequent surveys, self-caterers from across Scotland are still experiencing difficulties in accessing business support grants from the Scottish Government that are being administered by local authorities.

As evidenced by our surveys, access to business support grants from local authorities has caused multiple problems for self-catering operators in Scotland. This has included but was not limited to:

* An inconsistency of approach between local authorities and evidencing 140 days occupancy (which particularly impacted those in rural areas)
* Difficulties evidencing the criteria in relation to primary source of income
* The inability to evidence 2019/20 incomes
* The lack of an appeals process in some local authorities
* The lack of clear guidance from the Scottish Government to local authorities
* The cumbersome and bureaucratic nature of the application process itself
* Even when applications have been approved, many self-caterers have endured lengthy waits of more than two weeks or more to receive funds.

**Surveys**

Links to the full results and analysis of our sectoral surveys can be found below:

[ASSC Sectoral Survey into Self-Caterer Access to Covid-19 Business Support](https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-into-Self-Caterer-Access-to-Covid-19-Business-Support.pdf)[[2]](#footnote-2)

[ASSC Sectoral Survey into Self-Caterer Access to Covid-19 Business Support Week 3](https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-into-Self-Caterer-Access-to-Covid-19-Business-Support-Week-3.pdf)[[3]](#footnote-3)

[ASSC Sectoral Survey Week 4](https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-Week-4.pdf)[[4]](#footnote-4)

[ASSC Sectoral Survey Week 5](https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-5-1-1.pdf)[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. The ASSC asked one question – ‘Have you benefitted from financial support from the Scottish Government during the Covid-19 crisis’. Of the 560 respondents to this 24-hour online survey on 24th June, 66% said yes and 34% no. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-into-Self-Caterer-Access-to-Covid-19-Business-Support.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-into-Self-Caterer-Access-to-Covid-19-Business-Support-Week-3.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-Week-4.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ASSC-Sectoral-Survey-5-1-1.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)