



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**WRITTEN QUESTION
FOR ANSWER BY THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMY
ON 14 JANUARY 2022**

Sam Rowlands (North Wales): What assessment has the Welsh Government made of the impact that current alert level 2 COVID-19 restrictions are having on the tourism sector? (WQ84164)

Sam Rowlands (North Wales): In light of Wales being at COVID-19 alert level 2, what additional support is the Welsh Government providing to the tourism sector? (WQ84165)

Sam Rowlands (North Wales): In addition to the Wales International Inbound Tourism Fund, what further action is the Welsh Government taking to promote Wales an international tourism destination for 2022? (WQ84166)

Vaughan Gething:

I meet regularly with stakeholders to discuss the impact of the alert level two measures, which were introduced on Boxing Day, on businesses and the wider economy. The Welsh Government will continue to consider the latest data and the public health situation and will make further announcements about the need for these restrictions as part of the regular review process.

Businesses in Wales impacted by the rapid spread of the omicron virus are eligible for emergency financial support under a new Welsh Government support package. The £120m funding announced on 22 December will be available to businesses materially affected by the new restrictions to cover certain operating costs, excluding staffing, and will cover the period from 13 December 2021 to 14 February 2022.

Under the latest package, retail, hospitality, leisure and tourism business which pay non-domestic rates will be entitled to a payment of £2,000, £4,000 or £6,000 depending on their rateable value. In addition, a discretionary fund will be delivered by local authorities, via a short application process to support other businesses such as sole traders, freelancers and taxi drivers, and for businesses which employ people but do not pay business rates.

Businesses in the hospitality, leisure and attractions sectors, or their supply chains, can also apply to the Welsh Government for up to £25,000 in additional grant support via the £25m Economic Resilience Fund.

We have also announced a further £15.4m round of the Cultural Recovery Fund.

On 20 December, the Minister for Finance and Local Government announced the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2022-23, this included a package of non-domestic rates support. In 2022-23, the Welsh Government will provide £116m of targeted non-domestic rates support to businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors. Ratepayers will be eligible for 50% off their liability for the financial year. The amount of relief under the Welsh Government's Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief scheme will be capped at £110,000 per business across Wales. Our approach means that businesses in Wales will receive comparable support to that provided in other parts of the UK.

Tourism is core to the Welsh Government's *International Strategy*. We believe that growing and attracting high-spend visitors to Wales – in a way that is sensitive to our environment – is fundamental to the economy of Wales. We are ambitious for Wales as we enter 2022 and have published a recovery plan – *Let's Shape the Future* – to support the sector as we emerge from the pandemic. It has been important to keep Wales, when the climate has been right, front of mind for when markets fully re-open and we will continue to build on this as the public health situation allows.

Our pro-active marketing programme for 2022 includes promoting Wales to international audiences through consumer facing campaigns and media engagement in key markets around opportunities such as St David's Day, supporting wider Welsh Government priorities for global diaspora engagement and through the activity of partners.

Our efforts are focused on core growth international markets – Ireland, Germany and near-European countries and the USA, bringing the industry with us. We are also harnessing tactical opportunities as they arise – major events, new transport routes – to take Wales beyond these markets where appropriate.

We are targeting international visitors that are considering Britain by using digital partnerships to get Wales in front of those already searching for UK holidays and carrying out longer-term targeting of both international tour operators and other travel trade to develop and sell more Wales holidays; as well as promoting Wales as a world-class business events destination. We continue to work with VisitBritain to build Wales' position on the international stage through their platforms and channels.
