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17 December 2020

Dear Janice

Request for Further Information on Liquor Licensing and Covid-19 Funding for Sports Clubs

Further to your letter of 10 December, please see information below on the above matters.

Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill

The Committee asked “for a list of all liquor licence holders in Northern Ireland and whether any licences have been unissued”

Although the Department is responsible for the policy and legislation regarding the retail sale and supply of alcoholic drinks, the courts are responsible for issuing liquor licences and certificates of registration.

The Department does not hold the information requested, with District Courts providing the Department with only the number of liquor licences that they hold on an annual basis. The most recent figures the Department hold shows there were 2679 liquor licences in 2019. 1222 of these were for pubs, 605 for off-licences, 580 for restaurants, and the remaining for hotels, guest houses, conference centres etc. [It is possible for the courts to renew a licence up to 12 months after it expires and subsequent years' figures may therefore show adjustments due to successful late applications.

The information requested will be held in the register of liquor licences in each District Court.

In order to answer the question ‘whether any licences have been unissued’, if an applicant for a liquor licence meets the requirements under the Licensing (NI) Order 1996, the courts will issue

a liquor licence in respect of the the relevant premises. Officials have requested clarity on what is meant by 'unissued' to ensure a sufficient response has been provided.

Covid-19 Funding for sports clubs

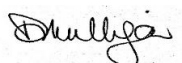
The Committee advised that they “have been made aware that there is a level of confusion from sports clubs where they need to submit their applications to the Covid-19 fund for financial support to assist with loss of income from their bar.” The Committee has asked “for clarity on this issue and ask that the Department issues guidance to sports clubs to help them identify the fund they should be applying to.”

The financial impact of Covid-19 on all sectors has been unprecedented and the Executive is committed to providing as much support as possible. Minister Ní Chuilín secured funding for the sports sector to be delivered through the Sports Hardship Fund and the Sports Sustainability Fund.

While the Sports Hardship Fund has currently closed for applications, the Sports Sustainability Fund, designed to help governing bodies of sport and clubs who have been financially impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, is currently open for applications. More information, including guidance notes, can be found at: <http://www.sportni.net/funding/our-funding-programmes/sports-sustainability-fund/>

I hope the Committee will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Diane Mulligan
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Private Office