



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **ASSC Hits Back at Short-Term Let Critics**

**The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers, the only trade body representing the interests of the traditional self-catering sector in Scotland, has responded to the increasing level of criticism levelled at the short term letting sector. A number of reports released in recent weeks ignore the substantial benefits the sector brings to the local and national economy.**

In the second in a series of briefing papers on short-term lets, Andy Wightman, a Scottish Green MSP for Lothians, has alleged that millions of pounds in non-domestic rates revenue is being avoided by short-term let property owners. Wightman has also criticised short-term lets for causing a number of problems in Edinburgh, ranging from anti-social behaviour to housing shortages.

Fiona Campbell, Chief Executive of the ASSC said: "This report reads like another list of prejudices against short term lets as opposed to being a reasoned analysis of the sector. We are very concerned at the wholly negative portrayal of short-term lets and the unbalanced media coverage on the issue. Short-term rental has been a successful part of the Scottish tourism economy for many years and will be crucial in securing the goals set out in the national tourism strategy."

Rather than avoiding tax, many ASSC members have in fact been the subject of crippling rises in business rates, with an average sector increase of 65% following the recent rates revaluation, the highest increase in the hospitality industry. The ASSC hopes that the forthcoming recommendations of the Barclay Review will help find a sustainable and long-term solution to the problems associated with business rates.

Communities and local businesses, as well as events and visitor attractions throughout Scotland, clearly benefit from the short-term and holiday let sector. An analysis commissioned by the ASSC, and conducted by Frontline Consultants, highlighted that the traditional self-catering sector supports 15,271 FTE jobs in Scotland. It also shows the significant knock-on effects it has for the wider economy, with self-catering holidaymakers spending £723m in Scotland. The growth of the sector also increases tourism opportunities, drawing in guests who may not have otherwise been attracted to Scotland, and is particularly vital to Edinburgh during the International Festival and Fringe.

Many of the grievances aimed at short-term and holiday lets are often based on misconception, or are over-estimated. For instance, in relation to anti-social behaviour, Edinburgh City Council has acknowledged that "recorded complaints are low" and statistics show a decrease in the number of complaints against short-term let properties between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

As part of the work of the Scottish Government's Expert Panel on the Collaborative Economy, Indigo House – a housing and regeneration consultancy – was commissioned to undertake scoping research on the demand and supply of short-term lets in Scotland. However, it is important to recognise that research utilising assumptions from data-scraping is open to dispute. Due to its limitations,

the report should not be regarded as the final word on the matter and it is imperative that the Scottish Government focuses on accurate sources of data when assessing trends in the market.

Fiona Campbell added: "The ASSC wants to ensure that the development of the short-term rental sector is a success and continues to benefit Scotland's vital tourist economy. We would welcome a constructive exchange of views with critics of the industry in order to answer some of their concerns."

ENDS

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