**Template Letter for MSPs**

When many people send the same letter, MSPs can dismiss it as a coordinated “copy-and-paste” campaign. To make each letter stand out and resonate personally, members should **authentically personalise** letters while keeping the core message intact.

**Tips for Personalising the Letter to Your MSP**

**1. Start with Your Story**

Open with a few sentences about:

* Where your business is based
* How long you’ve been operating
* Why you’re proud of what you do (e.g. support local suppliers, offer accessible accommodation, welcome returning guests year after year)

**Example:**

*"I’ve run a small self-catering cottage in Aberfeldy for 12 years. Our guests bring vital income to local shops, cafes, and activity providers — and we’ve welcomed visitors from across the world.”*

**2. Explain What Happened to You**

Briefly describe your personal experience with the NDR removal:

* Did you receive a letter?
* Were you compliant but removed anyway?
* How much was your Council Tax bill?
* Have you had to speak to Sheriff Officers or consider closing?

**Example:**

*"I never received any notification from the Assessor. I only realised I’d been removed when I received a Council Tax bill for £6,200 — backdated to April 2023 and rated as a second home. This has put my business and wellbeing under huge pressure."*

**3. Describe the Impact in Human Terms**

Make it real and emotional — not just numbers:

* Mention stress, uncertainty, sleepless nights
* Talk about how this has affected your family, mental health, or relationships with staff and guests

**Example:**

*"The anxiety of not knowing how to pay this bill — on top of losing my Small Business Bonus — has been overwhelming. I’ve even considered shutting down a business I’ve spent over a decade building."*

**4. Tailor Your Ask**

You can keep the core request (moratorium, review, reform), but rephrase it in your voice. Use plain language and say how the MSP’s help would matter.

**Example:**

*"I’m asking you, as my MSP, to push for a pause on enforcement, a fair review of these removals, and a proper appeals process that recognises when people never got the chance to respond."*

**5. Make it Easy for Them to Respond**

Finish by inviting them to reply or meet:

*"Please let me know if you’d like to discuss this further. I’d welcome the chance to speak with you about how this is affecting businesses like mine."*

Even small changes — using your own voice, telling your story — make letters far more likely to be taken seriously by MSPs and their staff.

Would you like a one-page “Personalisation Guide” PDF for members to download alongside the template?

**Dear [MSP Name],**

**Subject: Unjust Removal from Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)**

I am writing to express deep concern about the sudden and distressing removal of my self-catering business from the Non-Domestic Rates system due to recent changes under *The Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2024*.

Despite continuing to meet the requirement of letting my property for more than 70 nights annually, I was removed from the Valuation Roll without receiving any prior notice from the Assessor. Like many others, I only became aware of the change when I received a substantial Council Tax bill — backdated to April 2023 and charged at double rates (200%) as a second home.

This has caused:

* Severe financial stress and cashflow disruption
* Emotional distress and anxiety
* Risk to the future viability of my business

According to recent survey data from the Association of Scotland’s Self-Caterers (ASSC):

* 63% of affected operators never received the Assessor’s letter
* 40% or survey respondents had been removed from NDR
* 95% of those removed had evidence to meet the 70-night threshold
* 81% received retrospective Council Tax demands of up to £100,000
* 22% have had cases referred to Sheriff Officers

The lack of traceable or recorded delivery for such a significant legal notice undermines due process. In legal terms, the **presumption of delivery is rebuttable** — and I am living proof that this presumption has failed. I was not given a fair opportunity to respond or challenge the removal.

I respectfully request that you:

* Support a **moratorium** on enforcement action for 2023/24
* Back a **review of all removals** where no traceable notice was provided
* Advocate for **legislative reform** to require proof of delivery and a clearer appeals process

Scotland’s small self-catering businesses are the backbone of rural and tourism economies. We are not trying to avoid regulation — we are asking for fairness, transparency, and respect.

Please stand with us in calling for immediate action.

Yours sincerely,
**[Your Name]**