

Local papers should be given same support as retailers

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Local newspapers need the same financial support being offered to the retail, leisure and hospitality industry, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The party will table an amendment in Holyrood today seeking the increased assistance for one of the country's most under-pressure industries.

MSP Murdo Fraser said, given the Scottish Government had earmarked journalism as a key industry, they deserved the same level of support as others.

Some provisions have been made for increased advertising from the Scottish Government.

But given the local press has lost 75 per cent of advertising revenue and 25 per cent of circulation cash, it's not enough to guarantee the sector's future.

The amendment has been submitted to Stage Three of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill.

Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser said:

"Local newspapers have been rightly recognised as a key industry.

"Now they need the Scottish Government support which comes with this status.

"It would be relatively straightforward for the SNP government to provide local newspapers with the same support the retail, hospitality and leisure industry receives.

"Scotland's newspaper industry is vital to society and democracy at the best of times.

"But given the scale of the crisis we're living through, we need trusted news sources more than ever.

"The SNP must recognise that with an adequate package of support."