

# Government Statement – All pubs asked to close from tonight

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### *All pubs asked to close from tonight*

#### ***Government strongly advises against any 'House Parties'***

Following discussions today with the Licenced Vintners Association (LVA) and the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI), the Government is now calling on all public houses and bars (including hotel bars) to close from this evening (Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March) until at least 29<sup>th</sup> March.

The LVA and VFI outlined the real difficulty in implementing the published Guidelines on Social Distancing in a public house setting, as pubs are specifically designed to promote social interaction in a situation where alcohol reduces personal inhibitions.

For the same reason, the Government is also calling on all members of the public not to organise or participate in any parties in private houses or other venues which would put other peoples' health at risk.

The Government, having consulted with the Chief Medical Officer, believes that this is an essential public health measure given the reports of reckless behaviour by some members of the public in certain pubs last night.

While the Government acknowledges that the majority of the public and pub owners are behaving responsibly, it believes it is important that all pubs are closed in advance of St. Patricks' Day.

The Licenced Vintners Association (LVA) and the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI) both supported this decision and urged all their members to close in line with the Government's request.

The Government and the LVA and VFI also discussed the support measures for businesses and their staff affected by the COVID-19 crisis which have been put in place last week.

The Government will continue to monitor the situation, including the compliance of all pubs with this request, as well as any further or different measures which might be required in the future.

The effectiveness of the Guidelines on Social Distancing in other parts of the hospitality and leisure industry, for example restaurants and cinemas, will also be kept under review and subject to further consultation with stakeholders in the coming days.