

## Government laying off 25,000 pub workers on Christmas Eve

**Sustainable solutions needed or tug of war will start again at beginning of January**

### **Enormous levels of stress among publicans and staff**

The Government has laid off 25,000 people working in pubs across the country on Christmas Eve, generating enormous levels of stress amongst publicans and their staff, according to the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA).

They also warned that the "tug of war" around reopening will start again in earnest from the beginning of January 2021, unless the Government starts coming up with more sustainable solutions. With the hospitality sector now set to close on Christmas Eve for the third time this year, the LVA has said a new approach is now required before the stop/ start mechanism devours the industry in 2021.

The LVA also characterised the latest actions taken by Government as proof of their strategy failing the hospitality sector.

This will be the third lockdown pubs and restaurants across the country have faced. Despite shutting hospitality in Dublin in September and around the rest of the country at the beginning of October, these measures proved ineffective in preventing a wider lockdown of the economy. Traditional pubs in Dublin have been closed continuously since March.

"This is yet another example of horrendous treatment of the hospitality sector by the Government," said Donall O'Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA. "The day before Christmas they are laying off half the staff in the industry and providing them with a very uncertain future having previously forsaken the other half of the industry working in traditional pubs.

"Their whole strategy basically consists of one tool, lockdown. No alterations in their approach, no considering thinking. Instead, their kneejerk reaction is to throw hospitality under the bus once more. They seem hellbent on pursuing this course of action despite a complete absence of any statistical evidence showing that hospitality is the cause of the rise of infections in this country. They also continually fail to account for the extensive safety requirements implemented by the hospitality sector in this country.

"They need to take into account the ongoing uncertainty this is causing, the enormous stress this is putting people working in the industry under and the damage these repeated closures is doing to these businesses. They also need to provide better supports to those working in the hospitality sector, if they still want to have a viable hospitality sector in this country when the pandemic ends. Staff are already seeking out new career paths.

"Either the Government needs to come up with more sustainable solutions or the tug of war to have the hospitality sector reopen will begin again in earnest from the beginning of January. They can't keep doing this or this stop/ start approach will devour the industry in 2021," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.

The LVA also called again on the Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar TD to honour his commitment to meet with the LVA to plan for the sustained reopening of the entire pub sector, which now needs to happen as a matter of immediate urgency.