

Government needs to make a decision this week on reopening – LVA

Too late to make an announcement on 2nd July if reopening is happening on 5th July

Mixed messaging coming from Government must stop

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) has called on the Government to make a decision on the reopening of indoor hospitality this week, saying an announcement made on 2nd July will be too late if reopening is to take place on 5th July. The LVA also called on the Government to stop the mixed messaging, with different views being expressed by Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Tánaiste Leo Varadkar, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly and Minister Damien English over the last 48 hours.

Approximately 40%+ of the pubs in Ireland are currently not able to provide outdoor service, with some of these not having opened their doors for 464 consecutive days and counting. The Government had widely flagged that indoor service would resume for pubs and other hospitality businesses on the 5th July.

However there is now widespread doubt throughout the sector about what is to happen following the latest bout of contradictory messages coming from Government.

The LVA believes this is not a tolerable position for the entire hospitality sector who can't be expected to make decisions about hiring staff, securing supplies and preparing their premises at such short notice.

"The Government has to make up its mind and come to a decision this week," said Donall O'Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA. "They can't reasonably expect the entire hospitality industry to wait until 2nd July for what their decision will be and then be in a position to potentially reopen three days later. This is not practical and it is not how these businesses operate. They need to make decisions in relation to hiring staff, ordering stock and supplies, getting their premises ready to open. If all of that is to proceed they need to have sufficient notice.

"You would think the Government would be aware of this and the pressures they are unnecessarily placing on everyone in the hospitality sector after what has been going on for the last 15 months. The hospitality sector deserves more respect than that to have such a massive decision left until the last minute.

"The Government also needs to stop taking different positions on their messaging as it is creating stress and confusion for everyone. There have been mixed messages coming from the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, the Minister for Health and Minister English over the last 48 hours. It has to stop. The tens of thousands of people in hospitality who are awaiting news of whether we will get to provide indoor service from 5th July shouldn't be left second guessing which member of Cabinet they should believe. Consistency of message and approach surely isn't too much to ask from Government given the enormity of this decision for our sector," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.