

Latest suggested hospitality lockdown highlights failure of Government strategy

Government needs to commit to roadmap for hospitality sector and proper level of support

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The latest indication the Government is to once again lockdown the hospitality sector showcases the failure of the Government's strategy to deal with the pandemic, according to the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA). Pointing to the repeated use of this tactic by the Government, the LVA said doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result is the “definition of madness”.

This will be the third lockdown the hospitality sector has faced. Despite shutting hospitality in Dublin in September and around the rest of the country at the beginning of October, the wider economy still went into lockdown in October.

According to the latest HPSC data no outbreaks have been associated with pubs since reopening.

The LVA described the Government approach of singling out pubs, restaurants and hotels as “crushing the hospitality sector”.

“The suggestion coming from the Taoiseach last night is yet more devastating news for the sector,” said Donall O’Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA. “How can an entire industry be expected to keep going like this? Allowed to open up and then shut down again after only 3 weeks. The implications this will have on staff, on stock, on bills and on the mental health of those working in hospitality is going to be enormous.

“It is clear that the Government's yo-yo approach isn't working. The Government and NPHEt seem to have a one track mind when it comes to dealing with this pandemic – repeated lockdowns which are crushing the hospitality sector. They've already kept the traditional pubs in Dublin closed since mid March without evidence to back this approach. This is another disproportionate response which shows how limited the Government and NPHEt are, how poorly thought out their approach is and the narrow scope of their focus. Yet again it is the hospitality sector being picked on for a rise in infections occurring in settings across the economy and across the country.

“The definition of madness is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. The Government needs to provide a new strategy for hospitality and provide some hope for our sector – we provide safe, controlled and policed environments with HPSC data showing there have been no outbreaks associated with pubs since reopening.

“We are again calling on the Government to set out a fully formed roadmap for the hospitality sector and, until we are allowed to reopen on a sustainable footing, to double the level of CRSS support for the pub sector while we are forced to stay shut through no fault of our own,” Mr. O’Keeffe concluded.