

LVA calls for clarity on pub response to Coronavirus

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA), the representative body for Dublin publicans, has called for clarity for how pubs should address the coronavirus situation.

Following the statement made by An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD that restaurants and cafes can remain open, the LVA believes it would be beneficial for the public health if pub specific advice was provided.

Specifically, the LVA is calling on the Government to consult with the Expert Advisory Group to ascertain best practice in addressing the following matters.

- **What is the official guidance for pubs who have a capacity exceeding 100 people?**
- **Given the social dimension of pubs, what is the official guidance for how social distancing should be implemented in a pub context?**
- **How does the Government plan on addressing the financial impact on the hospitality sector?**

"Following on from the Taoiseach's statement, there is a lot of confusion amongst publicans across Dublin as to what action they now need to take," said LVA Chief Executive Donall O'Keeffe. "For that reason we are calling on the Government and the Expert Advisory Group to provide specific guidance for how pubs should respond to the coronavirus situation.

"By their very nature pubs are social hubs where people deliberately congregate close to one another. Implementing a one metre gap between tables for example might be one step that we could take, but that won't stop people from grouping together or congregating in other parts of the pub, for example at the bar.

"Our members are committed to playing their part in acting in the best interests of our staff and customers. Public health is our sole and over-riding priority. But publicans are not experts in public health and there is a severe lack of clarity as to how we should now respond. This is a time for listening to the experts and to be guided by the experts. That is why we believe it is imperative that the Expert Advisory Group and the Government provide pub specific guidance on these issues as a matter of real urgency," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.