

No pub reopening this year a nightmare scenario

Specific Government Support Scheme for Pub Sector Required, if this scenario confirmed

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA), the representative body for publicans in Dublin, has described the possibility of pubs being unable to reopen until a vaccine for COVID19 is found as the nightmare scenario for the pub sector which will put many out of business for good.

This follows comments made by Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD who told the Sunday Independent, *"So I can't see how people can be in packed pubs again as long as this virus is still with us and we don't have a vaccine or an effective treatment."* In the same piece, Minister Harris suggested the vaccine or treatment won't be in place until 2021.

Speaking in reaction to those comments, LVA Chief Executive Donall O'Keeffe said, "That is the absolute nightmare scenario for the entire pub sector. If that happens then most pub businesses in this country will be out of business for good.

"The LVA and its members will absolutely support whatever measures are deemed necessary in the interests of public health, as we have done from the beginning of this crisis, but if closing pubs until 2021 is going to be necessary, then it is essential that a pub specific support scheme is introduced. Otherwise there won't be a pub industry in this country by the time a vaccine is found."

"The LVA welcomed the strong Government support for the 50,000 staff laid off as a result of the crisis. This will have to be extended for the duration of the pub closure period. However unless it is supplemented with a specific support scheme to keep the pubs themselves afloat, the staff will have no jobs to return to.

"This is undoubtedly a very difficult time for everyone in this country. While Minister Harris is doing an exceptional job at a time of national crisis, his comments have really petrified the entire pub sector across the country and many are now concerned not only about how to survive this pandemic, but also whether they will still have a business when this crisis eventually passes," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.