

## Vaccine rollout success facilitates indoor hospitality by 1st July – LVA

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) says the success of the vaccine rollout should facilitate the resumption of indoor hospitality by the 1<sup>st</sup> July at the latest. That date provides for up to another five full weeks to substantially complete the vaccine rollout which would allow the safe return of indoor service.

45% of the adult population has now received a vaccine, while Tánaiste Leo Varadkar was recently reported to have said that all adults should be offered access to the vaccine portal by the end of June.

Indoor hospitality is due to resume for all hospitality outlets in Northern Ireland from Monday, while hotels are to resume indoor service from 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Pubs and restaurants in the Republic will be able to provide outdoor hospitality from 7<sup>th</sup> June, although currently there is no confirmed date for when they can reopen their doors for indoor service.

"The success of the vaccine rollout is completely changing the picture when it comes to the pandemic," said Donall O'Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA. "The tremendous effort of our health service and health care workers in delivering the vaccine is making a major difference on a daily basis. Hospital admissions are reducing and the number of people in ICU has also fallen considerably. That progress is likely to continue throughout the rest of May and into June. Those involved in the vaccine rollout deserve immense gratitude for all they have done and are continuing to do.

"Thankfully this success also makes it safer for other activity to resume, including indoor hospitality service. Given that indoor service will be allowed in hotels and guesthouses from 2<sup>nd</sup> June and in all hospitality settings in Northern Ireland from Monday, we believe it would be reasonable that indoor service should resume no later than 1<sup>st</sup> July.

"While we welcome the fact that outdoor hospitality will return in another couple of weeks, unfortunately not all pubs and restaurants will be in a position to provide service of that nature. Outdoor is a very short term solution to facilitate some resumption of activity but it certainly won't allow for the recovery of the hospitality industry and full resumption of employment in the sector. That is why everyone in our industry is keenly awaiting confirmation for when we can open our doors for indoor hospitality.

"We also strongly welcome recent reports that social distancing requirements will be 1 metre for both outdoor and indoor service and that no time limits will apply. The abolition of the artificial divide between food pubs and traditional pubs is also a huge positive for our sector. These will really help our recovery. Given these details have now been confirmed we hope the publication of the official guidelines will take place as early as possible this week. They are badly needed to allow our industry to prepare for the return of customers outdoors in the coming weeks," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.