

Dublin's Traditional Pubs reach 400 consecutive days of closure – LVA

Vintners launch 'Call to Action' to push for outdoor service for all pubs and hospitality from late May

Indoor service for all pubs and hospitality should resume in June, in line with the reopening of hotels

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) has launched a 'Call to Action', on the day traditional pubs in the capital reached 400 consecutive days of closure.

Pubs across Ireland shut their doors on 15th March last year and Dublin's traditional pubs have been prevented from opening for a single day since. They represent one third of the pubs in the Capital. In that period, the Republic of Ireland has experienced the most severe hospitality closure in Europe.

The LVA is urging publicans across Dublin to mark the day by contacting their local political representatives and urging them to ensure all pubs – traditional and gastro – as well as other hospitality venues can start providing outdoor service from the week beginning 24th May. Outdoor activity is widely acknowledged as being relatively safe and the LVA believes the end of May represents a reasonable timeframe for this activity to recommence.

Other points the LVA is asking publicans to highlight include:

- The reopening in Northern Ireland and Britain will see all types of hospitality venue treated the same.
- Indoor service for all hospitality businesses in Northern Ireland commences on 24 May, the same day as the LVA proposes outdoor service to resume in the Republic.
- Any long delays between the reopening of hospitality in Northern Ireland and the Republic will inevitably lead to thousands of people crossing the Border every week to make use of pubs and restaurants.
- The risk profile for drinking or dining indoors is the same for all forms of hospitality venue – whether it is in traditional pubs, gastropubs, restaurants or hotels.
- If hotels are to reopen in June, they will have to be able to provide indoor service for their guests. At that time indoor service across all forms of hospitality should resume.
- Any move to advance the reopening of certain sections of hospitality over others will be regarded as a discriminatory choice made by Government which will not be accepted.
- All hospitality should Open Together.

"It is hard to believe that it is now 400 days since pubs across Dublin and the rest of the country closed their doors," said Donall O'Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA. "Pubs were the first sector to close and did so willingly. It is fair to say that the hospitality sector has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic, but even within our industry some have struggled more than others. Traditional pubs across the country have had it harder than other forms of hospitality and the traditional pubs in Dublin were even more marginalised as they haven't opened their doors for the last 400 days and counting.

"We believe this unjust segmentation has to stop. As we reach this unfortunate milestone we are launching a call to action and urging all our members to contact their political representatives. They should press for the reopening of the hospitality sector to begin with outdoor service for traditional pubs, gastropubs, restaurants and hotels from late May. This matches up with the timeframe outlined by NPHET for social contact to remain unchanged and also for the further rollout of vaccines.

"We also are encouraging our members to press for limited disparity between the reopening of hospitality in Northern Ireland and the Republic. Any major gap will just see thousands of people travel across the Border every week to enjoy pubs and restaurants.

"Our members should also highlight that the risk profile is the same for indoor hospitality service in all venues – traditional pubs, gastropubs, restaurants and hotels. With hotels expected to reopen in June, all forms of hospitality should be allowed to resume indoor service from that point especially with the rollout of the vaccine due to have reached 80% of the adult population that month.

"We see no justifiable reason for any section of hospitality to be favoured over others. On the day Dublin's traditional pubs reach 400 consecutive days of closure the tiered treatment needs to end," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.



LVA Chief Executive, Donall O'Keeffe and LVA Chairman Noel Anderson mark 400 consecutive days of closure for Dublin's traditional pubs outside Leinster House.