

8pm curfew for pubs and restaurants represents 'closure under camouflage' – LVA

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) has said that the decision by the Government to implement an 8pm curfew for pubs and restaurants is "closure in camouflage". They say most pubs will now be unable to viably operate in that timeframe and will now have to close anyway, putting tens of thousands of people out of work from next week.

They also questioned how the arbitrary closing times of 5pm or 8pm were decided upon by NPHET and the Government, with no scientific explanation currently having been provided.

Speaking in reaction to these developments, Donall O'Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA said, "Obviously we are very disappointed about this decision as it clearly amounts to closure in camouflage. Most of our members will now take the decision to shut their doors as they simply won't be able to afford operating in these conditions.

"Many pubs have been expressing the view that they would rather be asked to close than have to accept an arbitrary curfew of 5pm or 8pm.

"Obviously though that would then represent an official lockdown of our sector and for some reason neither NPHET nor the Government are willing to be upfront about what this means. Instead they get a bargain basement lockdown, where it's the employees, the pubs, the restaurants and all their various suppliers that will really pay the price. We need immediate and comprehensive supports to now be put in place.

"We also seem to be heading towards ongoing, rolling closures of hospitality for as long as the pandemic persists. If that's going to be the case then the Government should be upfront and tell it straight to the industry.

"If that's not what they want then a plan of practical measures such as ventilation standards that will allow our industry to function while Covid-19 and its many variants are still an active part of our lives has to be developed. We can't stay closed indefinitely, yet that increasingly seems to be the Government's approach to our sector. We need a realistic long term plan," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.