

## Government can't hide behind NPHET now

### **Any decision to keep wet pubs closed while other parts of hospitality open will be political decision based on zero evidence made by FF, FG and Green Party**

The Government can't hide behind NPHET now and any move to separate out 'wet' pubs will be a political decision made by members of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party which is not backed up by any evidence, according to the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA).

Zero evidence exists that 'wet' pubs carry a greater risk than other hospitality venues such as restaurants or gastropubs. Any 'risk' is the same for all venues where alcohol is served, with zero distinction being made between these different types of outlets.

The same time limits apply in wet pubs, gastropubs and restaurants. The same social distancing requirements apply. Table service is also compulsory in all these venues.

The Gardai also have the same powers to shut down on the spot any of these venues who are not complying with the regulations.

As Donall O'Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA says, the Government are now exposed if they choose to single out one part of the hospitality sector:

"The Government can't hide behind NPHET now if they decide to single out the 'wet' pubs and keep them closed. It will now be quite clear this is a decision that is only being made by members of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party and they will have to own that decision. NPHET didn't tell them that only the 'wet' pubs should be kept closed. There is no evidence which exists that 'wet' pubs pose a greater risk than restaurants or gastropubs. The same regulations and enforcements are in place for all these types of venue – the same social distancing and the same time limits. We welcome restaurants and gastropubs being allowed to trade, but if the Government allows them to open while keeping the wet pubs closed, it will be exposed as simply their political choice. And that is a choice the individual TDs in Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party can expect to pay their own political price for," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.