

LVA rejects NPHEt suggestion of separating vaccinated from unvaccinated, describing it as ridiculous and unworkable

LVA Proposes delaying reopening until 19th July to allow 60-69 age group be vaccinated

Says NPHEt assumptions should be independently validated

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) has said they will reject any move to separate out the vaccinated from the non vaccinated, describing the suggestion as ridiculous and unworkable. Any such system would put every pub, restaurant and café in the country in an impossible position and would also lead to unvaccinated staff being charged with having to police who can and can't enter their premises.

In light of the ongoing concerns around the delta variant and in the interests of public health, the LVA is proposing that the reopening of indoor hospitality should be delayed until 19th July to allow for those in the 60-69 year demographic to receive additional vaccines.

The LVA has also cast doubt on the projections publicised by NPHEt last night, saying they need to be independent validated given the actual levels of hospitalisations and deaths in other countries where indoor hospitality is permitted and the delta variant is circulating.

"This latest suggestion from NPHEt that pubs and restaurants should police who is and isn't vaccinated is utterly ridiculous and unworkable," said Donall O'Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA. "NPHEt has lost the run of themselves and possibly the entire country this time. It is completely bizarre that they would introduce such a system this late and basically try to panic the entire country into accepting a process that would create a two tier society. Does anyone in NPHEt actually take into consideration the real world implications of these outlandish ideas at all? We can't take them seriously after this.

"From the outset of this pandemic pubs and hospitality have made massive sacrifices for the good of public health. We are calling on Government to allow reopening indoors on 19th July, which is a further two week delay meaning some pubs will have been closed for 489 consecutive days at that stage. This will allow for those aged 60-69 to receive further vaccines and will be in line with the date of resumption of international travel. Pubs would then reopen with the current social distancing requirements and licensing hours that currently govern outdoor service.

"We can see that hotels across the country are operating at full capacity for indoor service since 2 June, that indoor service is permitted across the border and in every other EU state.

"It is insane to contemplate that international travel would be permitted and yet indoor hospitality would not be allowed for all customers. Why is Irish hospitality being treated so differently? Anyone looking at other countries where indoor dining is already happening and where the delta variant is circulating can see that level of hospitalisations and deaths outlined by NPHEt simply aren't happening. NPHEt's claims need to be independently validated urgently.

"Given NPHEt's track record, we have no confidence they will recommend the reopening of hospitality this summer. By 19 July there will be well over 4.5m vaccines delivered and that should permit hospitality to reopen indoors. The Government must take charge now and commit to our reopening on 19 July," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.