

From the Minister of Finance

Gordon Lyons MLA

Copied to Executive Ministers for information

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Dear Gordon

EXEC-0061-2021: HOLIDAY AT HOME VOUCHER SCHEME

Thank you for your letter of 3 November to inform Executive colleagues on the proposed arrangements for the Holiday at Home Voucher Scheme.

I note that the costs of the scheme is to be met from the funding allocated to your Department for the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

I also note the risks you have set out, especially in regards to the deadline of 21 March 2021 when all vouchers will need to be redeemed in order that the costs for the scheme can be met in this financial year. I think it is important to point out that should there be delays in launching the scheme and vouchers are not redeemed or accrued by the end of the financial year, your department must accept that it will need to absorb any costs that fall into the new financial year.

You will be aware that since the Executive has yet to set the Budget for the future years, any costs or tails of costs from the Economic Recovery Action Plan needs to be absorbed within the budget outcome.

I note your intention to provide a Ministerial Direction to your Accounting Officer to implement the scheme. I am surprised to note that this action is necessary due to the urgent need to test the system in time for a go live in the New Year. Since this scheme was originally intended to launch in December 2020 but withdrawn due to COVID restrictions I would have thought there has been sufficient time to take the necessary actions to determine the value or net impact of the scheme.

However, since you have advised that feedback from industry strongly support the need for such a scheme which is seen as an important intervention to help the

Tourism sector during the difficult winter months, if the Executive is in agreement, I am content with your intention to issue a Ministerial Direction to your Accounting Officer. In line with the established process, details of this Ministerial Direction will be published on my Department's website.

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Personal Data

**CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**