

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER
Diane Dodds MLA



From: Diane Dodds MLA
Minister for the Economy

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Date: 03 September 2020

To: Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Thank you for your letter of 1 September 2020 regarding the above.

I am very aware that the non-food pub sector is very keen to re-open. These establishments have been closed for some six months and this is a significant challenge for these businesses. While much of our tourism and hospitality industry has had the opportunity to generate much needed revenue over the summer, this has not been possible for non-food pubs.

At our previous meeting on 24 August, the Executive agreed that no further restrictions would be lifted in the short term, and no new indicative dates for lifting these restrictions would be set. This has caused considerable difficulty for non-food pubs which hoped to re-open on 1st September.

To facilitate the re-opening of wet pubs it is incumbent on the Department of Health and the Public Health Agency to set out under what conditions non-food pubs can open and work with the industry to put in place the right conditions. We cannot have a position where this part of the industry is closed indefinitely with no prospect of re-opening.

I welcome the decision taken at today's Executive Meeting that the Junior Ministers should engage with the industry to plan a way forward that will allow non-food pubs to open. I am confident that they will find a reasonable path to deliver this and I look forward to working with you in progressing it.

I am copying this to the Attorney General, Departmental Solicitor's Office, First Legislative Counsel and to Executive Secretariat.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

DIANE DODDS MLA
Minister for the Economy