



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HOTELS  
FEDERATION

## **NIHF STATEMENT – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

### **Hotel opening in Republic of Ireland brought forward**

#### **NI Executive agrees 3 July reopening date for wider tourism industry**

Northern Ireland Hotels Federation (NIHF) CEO Janice Gault says:

The Northern Ireland Hotels Federation welcomes today's announcement from the Economy Minister, Diane Dodds MLA that the Executive has agreed that hotels and the wider tourism industry will reopen on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2020.

The Federation has lobbied for the hotel opening date to be reviewed and has worked in collaboration with others to ensure that additional aspects of the hospitality sector are opened in the same timeframe.

There have been considerable efforts behind the scenes through the Tourism Recovery Steering Group and we commend the Executive for responding in a positive way to the sector's requirements. We are also encouraged by the recognition of the role that tourism and hospitality have to play in restoring the local economy and social normality as the pandemic subsides. The safety of our staff and visitors remains paramount and it is essential that we give reassurance to local communities as visitors return.

Unlocking of hotels, in tandem with the wider industry including cafes, restaurants and pubs that serve food and visitor attractions, will enhance the visitor experience and enable Northern Ireland to be promoted as a destination offering, a great stay with lots of things to see and do. Today's new date also puts Northern Ireland on a similar trajectory to the Republic of Ireland, and will allow us to compete on an all island basis and hopefully, as transport links improve, in the GB market as well.

The NIHF recognises the trust that has been put in the sector with hotels remaining fully committed to opening in a safe manner with appropriate social distancing measures in place. The Federation has contributed to an industry framework with new operating guidelines and this process is at an advanced stage after consultation on a nationwide basis with government, industry, tourism agencies and trade unions. We see this as a positive pathway to move forward with hotels playing a considerable part in restoring the economy and welcoming visitors in July.

The move to an earlier date is good news for the economy in Northern Ireland and gives the tourism sector an opportunity to trade over the summer season. The Executive's recognition of the integral role that tourism and hospitality play is to be welcomed and the NIHF recognises the support of Minister for the Economy Diane Dodds MLA in bringing about today's welcome news.

