

Department for the Economy

15 June 2020

## **Economy Minister welcomes dates agreed for re-opening of tourism and hospitality**

Economy Minister Diane Dodds has welcomed indicative dates agreed for the re-opening of key sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry in Northern Ireland.

The key dates agreed today by the Executive are:

- Caravan parks, camping sites and self-catering tourist accommodation can re-open on 26 June;
- Other tourist accommodation can re-open from 3 July;
- Additional sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry can re-open from 3 July – this includes restaurants, cafes and coffee shops;
- Public houses and bars will also be permitted to re-open from 3 July for the purposes of selling food and alcohol on a table service basis. Public houses and bars with outside spaces, such as beer gardens, will be able to use these spaces to serve alcohol on a table service basis;
- These relaxations also apply to hotel restaurants, bars and outdoor areas. However, spas and leisure facilities at hotels will not be permitted to open at this stage.
- Visitor attractions can also open from 3 July.

The dates are conditional on controlling the rate of transmission of Covid-19 and social distancing measures will remain in place.

The Executive also agreed that consideration should be given to reviewing the two metre social distancing requirement.

Minister Dodds said: **“I am very pleased that the Executive has supported my plan to bring forward the conditional date for the re-opening of key parts of our tourism and hospitality industry.**

**“Providing clarity in respect of re-opening dates does not mean that businesses must open on these dates, this will be a matter for individual businesses to decide.**

**“Some will require longer than others to prepare for re-opening. However, setting the dates is an important step on the road to recovery and in enabling the tourism and hospitality industry to plan ahead.**

**“These businesses will operate in a new and challenging world when they begin to emerge from Covid-19. Social distancing and hygiene practices will be essential to reassure customers and employees that establishments are as Covid-19 safe as possible.**

**“The UK Government has been developing guidance to help tourism and hospitality businesses plan for social distancing and hygiene measures.**

**“My Department and Tourism NI are looking at how this might be tailored to Northern Ireland in consultation with industry, PHA, HSENI and other bodies.**

**This guidance should be published shortly and I would encourage all relevant businesses to refer to, and apply, it.**

**“I established the Tourism Recovery Steering Group and supporting Working Group to provide support to this very important industry and will continue to work closely with key stakeholders as they plan ahead.**

**“I plan to bring further proposals to the Executive in coming weeks regarding the reopening of bars whose primary focus is the sale of alcohol. I am also very aware of the need for clarity for our events sector. I will bring forward proposals for this key sector as soon as is practicable.”**

**Notes to editors:**

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