



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HOTELS
FEDERATION

NIHF STATEMENT – 25th June 2020

Changes to social distancing & further unlocking of the economy

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

“The update from the Northern Ireland Executive that social distancing measures can be reduced from 2m to 1m where acceptable with appropriate mitigations in place is a welcome development. The understanding is that further consultation will take place with the tourism and hospitality industry to find a workable framework. This is a matter that the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation has been working closely on with government to achieve and we will continue to contribute to this process. The Federation has outlined the challenges the 2m rule brings in terms of business viability and venue capacity. Today’s announcement is another positive step towards giving the sector a practicable framework and will dramatically improve viability for businesses with space constraints. The industry understands the need to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and will respect whatever is agreed.

As a sector, we fully appreciate the trust that has been placed on us and have always been committed to opening safely, with staff and customer well-being to the fore. The hotel sector will start to reopen on the 3rd of July with COVID-19 compliant trained employees staffing premises, structural changes in place and a strong message of reassurance for customers. The Federation acknowledges the considerable support from the Executive and the role that Economy Minister Diane Dodds MLA has played in championing our cause and lobbying for a viable operating framework. Today there were also indicative openings dates for gyms, leisure and therapy treatments which are an important element for many hotel businesses.

Hotels understand that they will have to put protocols in place to ensure that the business environs are safe and managed in terms of risk. There has been significant work in the creation of guidelines and operating procedures to ensure that hotels are COVID-19 safe. A collaborative approach has worked well to date and continuing partnerships is the way forward. This will stand us in good stead and hopefully result in a workable set of mitigations for the sector going forward.

The introduction of the “We’re Good To GO” industry standard today is another welcome development and a positive step towards building consumer confidence. This UK wide initiative will give Northern Ireland the opportunity to position itself well in the domestic market and add to our appeal to visitors from GB”.

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