



Mr. Donal O Keeffe
Chief Executive Office
Licensed Vintners' Association

JD/SB

16 March 2020

RE COVID-19 – Bar Closures

Dear Donal,

I note the responsible decision by bar owners to close public bars as and from 15 March 2020. This decision while difficult will no doubt assist the control of COVID-19 and protect both customers and staff. My colleague Gerry Light, Assistant General Secretary, wrote to you recently regarding the above and before a decision was made to close, unfortunately he as yet did not receive a reply and I fully understand that this simply may be due to the sheer volume of demands on your organisation.

Mandate Trade Union is the recognised union for employees in the Licensed Trade, and as such we have an important role to play in managing this crisis both now and into the future, and hopefully around an orderly return to work/business.

We have today been contacted by hundreds of our members concerned not only for their immediate foreseeable future, but also for the future of their employment. Therefore, we would ask that Licensed Trade employers display flexibility in dealing with their employees at this time, for example as a preference to temporary lay-offs, staff might be offered the facility of taking up accrued annual leave so as to ease the financial burden in the short term. It may also be possible for employees to advance some financial support on the basis that this would be recouped from wages when normality returns, we understand from Government sources that they are requesting that employers make up the difference between the special SW payments and normal employee take home pay, we further understand that Government have put aside funds and grants to facilitate this measure. I am of course aware that some employers themselves will be under financial pressure from lending institutions, suppliers etc., and if we can be of any assistance in lobbying on this matter we would gladly assist your efforts.

I think also that employers should as far as possible give some re-assurance as to post crisis re-employment as this will go a long way to reduce the anxiety of staff.

Finally, we would like to extend our solidarity to the Licensed Trade and assure you that at this time of national emergency, we in Mandate Trade Union will play our part in partnership with the trade.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely
For Mandate Trade Union

John Douglas
General Secretary

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