

RE-THINK AND RE-START

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HU
Hospitality Ulster

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The early predictions that the hospitality and tourism sector would be hit first, hit hardest, and take the longest time to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic have sadly proven to be true.

It is a year now from when the pandemic took hold and the first lockdown started. However, as we approach the end of the third and we hope, the last lockdown, we do so with a real sense of hope and dare I say it, confidence, that the hospitality and tourism sector can finally do what it does best, get back to trading.

Over the last 12 months the economy has suffered greatly as a result of the pandemic, in particular the hospitality and tourism sector has been one of the hardest hit. During that time, the resilience of the sector and the innovation of the operators within it, has once again shone through and, with support from Government, it is still poised to reopen, even after such long periods of enforced closure.

Throughout the pandemic I have worked closely with the sector, both in my role as Chair of the Hospitality Industry Response Group and in working with businesses on the ground to help them overcome the many challenges they've had to face.

From what I already knew and from what I have seen over the last 12 months within the industry, I have every confidence in our local operators to make the most of the reopening and to get back to delivering the high levels of service that they are renowned for.

We cannot be complacent though and we still need to be mindful of the legacy issues that the

pandemic has left us with. Chief amongst these is the increased level of debt that many businesses have had to avail of in order to survive. Whether this debt has arisen from banks, Government or suppliers, it must all be factored into planning for the future.

Over the coming weeks we will be sharing with you our thoughts on the economic recovery within the sector and providing you with a focus on the opportunities that may arise as the recovery builds momentum. The first of these articles is live on our website. [READ THE FIRST ARTICLE HERE.](#)

In the meantime, we will continue to work with you on the ground and also through the Hospitality Industry Response Group in its engagement with Government and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry is given every opportunity to reopen without restrictions and from there, to successfully rebuild its trade.

