

An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD,  
Department of An Taoiseach,  
Government Buildings,  
Merrion Street Upper, Dublin 2

1 September 2020

**Ref: Reducing uncertainty for business in future public health guidance**

Dear Taoiseach,

I am writing to you in relation to the ongoing uncertainty facing business and society in the context of decisions around future public health measures to address COVID-19. After 6 months working collectively as a society to suppress the devastating impact of the virus on our community, we ask for a better coordination forum with business.

Business wants to see a more effective model for deciding on and communicating public health measures. In particular, we believe that a more balanced approach is needed which reflects business and economic input in a more structured manner.

As the number of virus cases has increased again in recent weeks, resulting in additional local containment measures and the delay in the reopening roadmap, many businesses have become increasingly concerned about the impact of this uncertainty on their viability. This spike in uncertainty has also come at a time when Government support for the economy, through the wage subsidy scheme, is reducing, resulting in fears of further job losses and business closures.

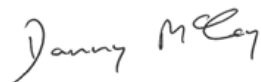
Business appreciates that public health measures will need to adjust to reflect the evolving risks from the virus, but it is vital that the current uncertainty in relation to the future development of such measures is reduced. For those businesses still required to remain closed, such as many pubs and other event and hospitality related businesses, the lack of guidance on plans for reopening provides a rapidly growing threat to survival. While for many businesses which are currently trading, the risk of future lockdowns, at a local, sectoral or national level, makes business planning exceptionally difficult. When businesses face such uncertainty, they will limit their hiring and investment plans to the minimum requirements with significant implications for the wider economy.

Ibec has noted Government plans to publish a new Roadmap for Resilience and Recovery and also proposals for a new system to signal changes in containment measures. Whatever the precise model for managing future public health measures, it is vital that the process involves direct input from business to help reduce the level of uncertainty currently facing employers and their employees.

Ibec remains fully committed to working with Government and its agencies to address the ongoing public health and economic implications of the crisis. However, we believe that an urgent reset is now needed in the Government process for deciding and communicating guidance on the public health measures.

I look forward to discussing these issues with you later this week and I hope this engagement can happen in a structured and regular manner, in order to ensure that business and economic concerns are strongly reflected in the relevant future Government decisions on public health guidelines.

Kind regards,



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Danny McCoy  
Ibec CEO

Cc:

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar  
Minister for Climate Action, Communication Networks and Transport, Eamon Ryan  
Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe  
Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly  
Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath  
Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach, Martin Fraser  
Secretary General, Department of Finance, Derek Moran  
Secretary General, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Transport, Mark Griffin  
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