

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

23rd August 2021

By email

Re: New Covid roadmap must give more autonomy to business for planned phased reopening

Dear Taoiseach

I am writing to request that the views of the business community are reflected in the upcoming revised Covid roadmap.

Covid has been a long and difficult journey for all in society but as a result of the tremendous success of the public vaccination programme, we can finally look forward to a much greater degree of normality. Business is fully aware that we will all need to live with Covid for some time to come, but the vaccination impact means that the risks to public health are significantly reduced.

With nearly nine out of ten adults now fully vaccinated, it is time that greater personal responsibility for individuals and autonomy for businesses in their office operations forms the core of the approach in the next phase of Covid. We welcome that Government is publishing a revised roadmap to reflect the vaccination progress. It is vital that this new roadmap is less prescriptive in nature than previously. Specifically it must provide the autonomy for all businesses to reopen fully in a safe and phased way.

Return to office is a key priority for many Ibec members and recent months have been a very frustrating period as businesses have been forced to revise their plans to bring staff back to offices on numerous occasions. The new roadmap must enable businesses to finally plan with certainty for a phased and safe return to office over the coming weeks and months. The experience with the Work Safely Protocol, together with extensive guidance from the Health and Safety Authority provides the confidence that all businesses can ensure appropriate measures for employees and customers.

Ibec also remains very concerned about the impact of the ongoing restrictions on elements of the Experience Economy. The particularly long length of the restrictions period for these businesses has left many of them and their employees in perilous circumstances. These businesses will face a difficult path in the return to viability, but Government restrictions should no longer be one of the obstacles that they need to grapple with. The roadmap must provide absolute clarity and certainty for all businesses to fully reopen as quickly as possible beginning no later than mid-September.

I wish colleagues and you well as you continue to navigate the many challenges which Covid has resulted in and all in Ibec remain available to support you in this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danny McCoy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Danny McCoy
CEO

cc: Government Cabinet Ministers