

Chambers Ireland has today (30 December 2020) expressed its disappointment at the need to impose a full Level 5 lockdown and calls on Government to prioritise planning for the Vaccine rollout.

Speaking this evening, Chambers Ireland Chief Executive, Ian Talbot, said

“It is desperately sad and frustrating that we find ourselves shuttering our country again in the face of this rising wave of Covid-19 cases. Firstly, our thoughts are with those who are directly affected – those who are sick, those who are treating the afflicted, and those who are recovering their own health. And then there are the people who Covid-19 impacts indirectly – those whose medical treatments are in danger of being cancelled in the face of the demands that this surge is placing upon our healthcare system, those who are isolated because of social distancing measures, and those whose livelihoods are threatened.

Along with the direct impact on the health of the nation, it is our domestic economy that continues to bear the brunt of the economic impact of Covid-19. Today’s news of further restrictions will be devastating for many people, and our morale, nationally.

We, however, must look forward.

For Government, while we welcome the continuation of valuable supports including the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, Covid Restrictions Support Scheme and Rates relief, the entirety of the programs in place will need to be kept under review as the continuing sawtooth lockdowns will make it incrementally harder for many companies to survive or reopen. In addition, the vaccine rollout is probably the most important mobilisation ever undertaken by the State. Government must ensure the robustness of the implementation plan and ensure our health services get any and all resources and support they require to deliver it.

For employers, this means continuing to interpret the restrictions conservatively as we move into the New Year. If people can work from home, then that is the only place they should be working from. Employers must do everything they can do to support their employees to work remotely.

Finally we call for a very high level of compliance by our citizens to minimise the continuing damage to our economy and societal wellbeing.