

140,000 workers laid off in Ireland over virus: state broadcaster

March 16 2020

Around 140,000 members of Ireland's workforce have been laid off owing to government measures to stem the spread of the coronavirus, the Republic's state broadcaster estimated Monday.

As many as 70,000 [restaurant](#) workers, 50,000 pub and bar staff, and 20,000 crèche and childcare workers are now out of work according to RTE.

The Irish government shut all childcare facilities, as well as schools and universities, for two weeks on Thursday.

Following a government request pubs across the nation were closed for the same period on Sunday.

The blow came ahead of St Patrick's Day on Tuesday—the annual celebration of Ireland's patron saint which traditionally serves as a boost for the hospitality industry.

The government has issued no directive to close restaurants, however under "social distancing" measures indoor gatherings are to be limited to 100 people.

Some restaurants remain open, but trade bodies have warned they are facing dwindling footfall and reservations.

"We want to close but they need to tell us so that everybody closes,"

Restaurants Association of Ireland CEO Adrian Cummins told RTE.

"We need to have a national call right across the country that any area where you have the opportunity for collective gathering needs to be now closed down."

The Irish [government](#) has introduced a six-week payment scheme to employees and self-employed people who are out of work "due to a downturn in economic activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic".

Ireland has suffered two deaths from the [coronavirus](#), and has 169 confirmed cases according to department of health figures updated late Sunday.

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