

Ireland to lift COVID lockdown on October 22

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Ireland on Tuesday announced that it will fully reopen on October 22 after 18 months of rolling lockdowns introduced to limit coronavirus infections.

"The time is now right to begin the move from regulation and widespread restrictions on people's personal freedom, to an approach primarily defined by [public health](#) advice, personal behaviour, judgement and responsibility," prime minister Micheal Martin said in a televised broadcast.

From September 6, there will be an easing of restrictions on organised indoor and outdoor events and mass gatherings.

Theatre, music and [live events](#) will at that point go ahead for vaccinated people at 60-percent capacity indoors and 75-percent capacity outdoors.

Restrictions on indoor and outdoor group activities will then be eased further from September 20.

The government hopes that by October 22 it will be able to remove the legal requirement to prove immunity in order to access indoor hospitality or other events.

It wants to be able to lift all remaining restrictions on indoor and outdoor events, along with the [legal requirements](#) for mask wearing outdoors and in indoor private settings.

"We've had to accept restrictions on our personal freedoms that would have been unthinkable just a couple of years ago," said Martin.

"Protecting lives and public health has demanded policies which have often been frustrating.

"We stuck together, we followed the best advice, we did what we were asked and we looked out for each other," he added.

Ireland's succesful vaccination programme, under which almost 90

percent of adults have been fully vaccinated, has made the next phase possible, said Martin.

But he warned: "We are very unlikely to ever be able to be rid of the virus completely. Indeed, we expect to see an increase in case numbers over the coming weeks."

More than 5,000 people have died of COVID in Ireland, which has a population of around 5 million.

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