



REAL ESTATE

Government Supports for Outdoor Dining and Takeaways Announced

by **Emer Wilkie**

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In anticipation of an ‘outdoor summer’, the announcement of measures relating to grants, planning exemptions for takeaways and the waiving of street furniture licence fees will be welcome developments for cafés, restaurants and the hospitality sector overall.

Outdoor dining spaces will be vital for businesses in hospitality that hope to resume trading from the proposed date of 7 June 2021. It is likely that many cautious customers will continue to have a preference for outdoor dining, even when indoor dining is an option again.

Proposed Supports to Businesses

Regulations aimed at supporting the hospitality sector by facilitating outdoor dining received cross-party support at an Oireachtas Committee meeting on 27 April 2021. The proposed supports to businesses are as follows:

- Street furniture licence fees will be waived until 31 December 2021 for outdoor dining.
- Businesses that do not have specific permission to operate as a takeaway and/or a delivery service may do so until 31 December 2021 without having to apply for change of use planning permission.
- Outdoor dining equipment will be included under the street furniture licence regime until 31 December 2021 rather than falling within the normal planning consent regime. That will include items such as awnings, canopies and electric heaters.

The Government’s press release is available [here](#).

Grants Available for Outdoor Dining

In addition, the Government and Fáilte Ireland launched the Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme worth €17 million on 31 March 2021. The financial assistance being offered to eligible hospitality and tourism businesses and local authorities is as follows:

- Businesses can receive a grant of up to €4,000 (up to €75% of the ex-VAT cost) for outdoor dining equipment by applying to their local authority. Equipment purchased between 1 April 2020 and 30 September 2021 is eligible for this grant.
- Local authorities can receive a grant of €200,000 for up to two locations to install permanent, robust, and design appropriate weatherproofing structures such as parasols, electric heaters, windbreakers. Additional funding is available, subject to the proposal submitted.

Further information on the Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme is available [here](#).

Comment

The proposed regulations and the Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme will provide valuable assistance to businesses and local authorities that decide to avail of the opportunities for outdoor dining this summer. At

the time of writing, many local authorities have begun considering appropriate locations for permanent outdoor spaces, with the aim of creating 'European-style' dining experiences within cities and towns.

Businesses are still required to submit an application for a street furniture licence to their local authority. Local authorities must inspect the proposed outdoor dining space and businesses will have to provide evidence that insurance requirements are in place.

If you would like further assistance or have any queries on Street Furniture Licences and the next steps you should take for your business, please contact John Campbell at john.campbell@lkshields.ie, Emer Wilkie at emil.wilkie@lkshields.ie or any member of the Commercial Property team at LK Shields.

About the Authors



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