

Call to 'keep hospitality in the loop' as first Omicron Covid variant case reported in Wales

Hospitality businesses across Wales must be "kept in the loop" over the next few weeks say the Welsh Conservatives as the first Omicron Covid variant case is reported in Wales.

The Omicron variant of concern – which has caused a surge in cases in South Africa – was identified in the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board area. Health chiefs say the case is linked to international travel.

It comes as Wales has seen Covid cases, hospitalisations and deaths falling in recent weeks but there are fears the variant could trigger another wave of infections, like those seen with the Alpha and Delta variants.

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The Welsh Conservatives said Labour ministers need to engage with business owners every step of the way as new details of the variant come to light.

Tourism and hospitality leaders are warning that already there are signs that anxiety over the new variant is leading to cancellations and people re-considering plans over the Christmas period.

The next Welsh Government Covid restrictions review takes place on December 10.

Welsh Conservative Shadow Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Tom Giffard MS, said: "I cannot stress enough just how important it is that businesses are consulted and supported by Labour ministers as we learn more about the Omicron variant.

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“The run-up to Christmas is normally the busiest time of year for firms in the hospitality and tourism sectors and this year would be a huge opportunity for them to recoup some of their losses throughout the pandemic.

“If the public health situation in Wales means changes to restrictions are needed, then it is vital Labour ministers work hand in hand with business to make sure they are supported and not kept in the dark.

“I hope more restrictions aren't on the way, but if they are, then we need to see clarity and proper engagement from Mark Drakeford and his Labour administration – it is key.”

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