

# No more COVID rules in England before New Year, Javid confirms

New Year's Eve plans in England have been given the green light, as Sajid Javid confirmed the government will not be imposing any further restrictions before the New Year.

The health secretary said people should "remain cautious" when taking part in New Year's celebrations – and take a lateral flow test before attending events.

Mr Javid did not rule out the possibility of further measures being taken in January, adding that the government "will see" whether the data suggests they are needed.

The decision comes as latest figures show England reported a [record number of new cases on Christmas Day](#).

Mr Javid said: "Of course we look at the data on a daily basis, that hasn't changed over the Christmas period, but there will be no further measures before the New Year.

Advertisement

"We won't be taking any further measures. Of course, people should remain cautious as we approach New Year's celebrations, and you know, take a lateral flow test if that makes sense.

"Celebrate outside if you can, have some ventilation indoors if you can, please remain cautious.

## More on Covid-19

## BREAKING NEWS

COVID-19: Number of people in hospital with coronavirus in England hits highest level since March



COVID-19: England reported record number of new cases on Christmas Day



COVID-19: Christmas travel disruption as Omicron hits rail and airline staffing

## Related Topics:

- [COVID-19](#)
- [Coronavirus](#)
- [Sajid Javid](#)

“And when we get into the New Year, of course, we will see then whether we do need to take any further measures – but nothing more until then at least.”

Mr Javid said while “there is still a lot of uncertainty” around Omicron – which it is believed makes up “some 90% of cases” across England at present – there has been positive news in recent days that the variant is milder.

“Now, that in itself is not good news enough – that is good news, but we know that it spreads very rapidly, so we have to set that news against that – but, whilst we should all absolutely remain cautious, we don’t think there is any need for any new measures until the New Year.

“But, of course, we will keep that under review.”

In other parts of the UK, post-Christmas restrictions have already been deployed.

Asked why the Scottish and Welsh governments and Northern Ireland executive have analysed the same data and introduced more measures, the health secretary reiterated that it is for each government to make their own decisions.

Mr Javid added that England is “very, very focused on vaccinations”.

“Vaccinations, antivirals, a testing regime and cautious behaviour that we are seeing – people’s changing in habits as we have seen over Christmas – this will all help to limit spread.

“But, of course, we will watch carefully what is happening in the hospitals, we are working to build hospital capacity as well and continue to do that.

“But we will watch the situation very carefully and should in the future we need to act, of course we won’t hesitate to do so.”

The announcement comes after Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with England’s chief medical officer Chris Whitty and chief scientific adviser Sir Patrick Vallance on Monday to discuss

the latest coronavirus data.

There were 113,628 infections confirmed on 25 December after a rush to get tested in the days prior, the latest data shows.

It has also been revealed that there were 103,558 on Boxing Day, and 98,515 in the last 24-hour period.

Separately, Scotland has recorded the highest number of daily COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic, early data suggests.

Scotland reported 8,252 cases on Christmas day, 11,030 cases on Boxing Day and 10,562 cases on 27 December.

It is worth noting that a lag in reporting means the majority of these cases will relate to tests done before the Christmas break.

Chief executive of NHS Providers Chris Hopson told Sky News earlier on Monday that there are some early positive signs that this wave will not be as bad as last January, which saw the country plunged into lockdown.

“[Hospitals are] not seeing the numbers of older people who’ve got real respiratory problems, needing critical care, needing very large amounts of oxygen support,” he said.

“We’re just not seeing those numbers at this point that we saw in January 2021.”

England is currently following Plan B, which includes guidance to work from home, mask-wearing in shops and other public settings and COVID-19 passes are needed to gain entry to some large events.

The PM has faced calls from some of his own Conservative backbench MPs to resist implementing further measures.

However, some experts have warned that if the latest figures

show rising infections are starting to put unmanageable pressure on the NHS, it may be necessary for Mr Johnson to intervene with more stringent restrictions.

The decision to postpone the decision to introduce any further measures into 2022 means it is likely Parliament will not be recalled early from Christmas recess.

Nightclub closures are among new measures being introduced in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to tackle the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

Measures elsewhere in the UK:

#### Wales

Since Boxing Day, nightclubs are closed and a maximum of six people are allowed to meet in pubs, restaurants and cinemas.

Up to 30 people are allowed at indoor events, while at outdoor events the limit is 50.

Social distancing of two metres is required in public places and offices.

#### Scotland

Since Boxing Day morning, social distancing of one metre is required at large events and attendance is limited to 100 people at indoor events where people are standing, or 200 for seated events inside.

For outdoor events, the limit is 500 people.

From 5am today, nightclubs have been forced to close for three weeks, table service is required in settings where alcohol is being served – and the one-metre rule applies to hospitality and leisure settings.

#### Northern Ireland

Also since Boxing Day morning, nightclubs have been forced to close while indoor standing events and dancing in hospitality settings is banned.

From today, a limit of six people – or 10 people from a single household – are allowed in indoor hospitality settings.

Children will not be counted in the total and weddings or civil partnership celebrations are exempt.

It is also “strongly recommended” that household mixing should be reduced to a maximum of three households, while businesses are being told to take “reasonable measures” to implement two-metre social distancing in office spaces.

Working from home is “strongly” advised where possible.