

UK Tiers Updated on Thursday this in my view means no change for wedding this weekend from my earlier email providing he doesn't make the changes immediate, as opposed from the following day.

Higher-level restrictions to come into force to control coronavirus

Higher-level restrictions will come into force to control rapidly accelerating coronavirus rates across Wales, First Minister Mark Drakeford said today (16 December).

The First Minister today confirmed the current conditions mean Wales has met the criteria in the new traffic-light Coronavirus Control Plan to move to alert level four.

The new restrictions will apply to all of Wales.

All non-essential retail, including close contact services and all leisure and fitness centres will close at the end of trading on Christmas Eve.

All hospitality premises will close from 6pm on Christmas Day.

Tighter restrictions on household mixing, staying-at-home, holiday accommodation and travel will apply from December 28, after the five-day Christmas period.

The First Minister urged everyone who can to work from home, saying it is one of the most important contributions we can all make to controlling the spread of coronavirus and saving lives. Mark Drakeford said:

“We are seeing levels of coronavirus in some parts of the country that we haven’t experienced at any point before in this pandemic. This pandemic is putting our NHS under intense and sustained strain. “There are more than 2,100 people with coronavirus symptoms in our hospitals – equivalent to five general hospitals fully occupied by people with coronavirus.

“This has been such a long and difficult year. We need to take this action to save lives and control the spread of this awful virus.”

The four UK governments met today to confirm the common arrangements for the five-day Christmas period. Joint advice will be published later today.

In Wales, the position will be that only two households should come together to form an exclusive Christmas bubble during that period.

The First Minister added:

“A smaller Christmas is a safer Christmas and a shorter Christmas is a safer Christmas.

“The fewer people we mix with in our homes, the less chance we have of catching or spreading the virus.

“None of us wants to be ill this Christmas. And we don’t want to give coronavirus to our close family or friends.”

The alert level four restrictions for household mixing, staying-at-home, holiday accommodation and travel will come into force after the five-day Christmas period on December 28.

Live updates as new tougher Christmas coronavirus rules announced by First Minister Mark Drakeford

Families are being told to limit Christmas gatherings to two families in Wales and all non-essential shops will have to close after Christmas Eve

Families are being told to limit Christmas gatherings in Wales to two households as First Minister Mark Drakeford brings in tougher restrictions.

The restriction on the size of Christmas bubbles appears to be a change to the advice in Wales rather than a legal change.

Mr Drakeford said it would become clear when a joint UK statement was issued later today but added that in Wales the very clear position was that "only two households should meet".

Boris Johnson has said that all four nations of the UK have "unanimously" agreed to keep the relaxed restrictions and that "we don't want to criminalise people's long-made plans".

The new restrictions in Wales mean:

All non-essential shops cannot reopen after Christmas Eve - meaning no Boxing Day sales on the High Street

Gyms, leisure centres, hairdressers and other close-contact services must all also shut at the end of the working day on December 24

Christmas bubbles should now only include two families instead of three

Full lockdown will start in Wales on December 28

The new restrictions apply to the whole of Wales. They will be reviewed after three weeks but there is no end date.

The First Minister said he had been forced to act because of the number of people in hospital with coronavirus.

Key points from First Minister Mark Drakeford's earlier announcement on Christmas in Wales

Only two households in Wales should come together to form an exclusive Christmas bubble during the five-day period, the Welsh Government has advised

When asked if this is a legal position or just advice, First Minister Mark Drakeford said he is not in a position to answer the question yet - stating that a joint UK statement was expected later today at which the position would become clear

Wales "must move" to alert level four after Christmas - this includes closing pubs and restaurants (except for takeaway), no household bubbles, and staying home unless there is a reasonable excuse

Plans for serial testing in schools from January onward as an alternative to self-isolation for teachers and students

No end date for lockdown

Mr Drakeford is continuing to take questions and has said that there is no end date for the level 4 restrictions being introduced after Christmas, but did confirm that they would be reviewed after

three weeks.

Trying to get across 'simple' message about households - First Minister

What is happening is that the law on households is not changing, but the guidance is.

Mr Drakeford said that it was "guidance" and it was the right thing to do.

Scotland has decided that on one night of the five-day period, up to three households can meet.

The First Minister said there were many variations they could have thought of and they decided on "simple was best" because cases were higher in Wales than in Scotland.

He said that clarity leads to "better results".

Clarification on two households announcement

Mr Drakeford is now taking questions from journalists and he has been asked to clarify the position on households meeting.

In his announcement, he said that the very clear position in Wales was that only two households should meet.

He is asked if this is a legal position or just advice - and Mr Drakeford says he is not in a position to answer the question yet.

He said a joint UK statement was expected later today at which the position would become clear.

But he said that in Wales the "clear message" is that only two households should form a bubble over Christmas.

He said: "In Wales, only two households should get together."

Boris Johnson has just told the Commons that the rules are not changing in England and that had been agreed by all the nations of the UK.

Mr Drakeford said they would allow a single household to join extended household and children of parents who are separated WILL be able to travel between both households.

12:29

The rules for level four

Just repeat this is exactly what we can expect when Wales goes into level four after Christmas:

Stay at home unless reasonable excuse

No household bubbles except people living alone are allowed to join another family in an extended household

No organised activities except volunteering

Non essential retail closed but click and collect allowed

Hairdressers closed

All pub and restaurants closed (except takeaway)

All gyms and leisure facilities closed

Holiday accommodation shut

Golf, tennis, outdoor sports pitches closed

Places of worship open

Playgrounds and parks open

All schools, childcare and universities open

Only two households should meet at Christmas

Mr Drakeford also reported back on the meetings he has been having with the other devolved nations in the UK and has said that the position now is that only two households in Wales should come together to form an exclusive Christmas bubble during the five-day period.

He said: "In the run up to Christmas, we will also take some extra steps to help control the spread of coronavirus.

"Everyone who can work from home should do so now. Working from home is one of the most important contributions we can make.

"Local authorities will now take decisions about the range of services they provide, such as libraries, leisure centres and recycling centres ahead of Christmas.

"Yesterday, I met the First Ministers of Scotland and Northern Ireland and Michael Gove from the UK Government to discuss the common arrangements for the five-day Christmas period

" We had a further meeting this morning.

"In the few short weeks since we made this decision, the situation has changed drastically as coronavirus has gripped the UK country once again.

"Later today, we will publish joint advice across the UK, explaining that a smaller Christmas is a safer Christmas.

"That a shorter Christmas is a safer Christmas.

"Here in Wales, the position is that only two households should come together to form an exclusive Christmas bubble during the five-day period.

"The fewer people we mix with in our homes, the less chance we have of catching or spreading the virus.

"None of us wants to be ill this Christmas. And we don't want to give coronavirus to our close family or friends."

12:20

Wales 'must move' to alert level 4

Wales First Minister Mark Drakeford has announced that Wales "must move" to alert level four after Christmas.

Speaking at the latest coronavirus briefing today, he announced that:

All non-essential retail, including close contact services and all leisure and fitness centres will close at the end of trading on Christmas Eve.

All hospitality premises will close from 6pm on Christmas Day.

And on December 28, tighter restrictions for household mixing, staying-at-home, holiday accommodation and travel will apply.

The new set of higher-level restrictions will apply to the whole of Wales.

Mr Drakeford said: “We must move to alert level four and tighten the restrictions to control the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

“When I spoke to you on Friday, I explained that if we didn’t see a change in the current course of coronavirus in Wales, then a move to tighter restrictions would be inevitable.”

He said cases are rising week on week, one in five people are testing positive for the virus, and the number of people in hospital with coronavirus symptoms has risen to record levels.

More than 2,100 people, equivalent to five full general hospitals And the number of people in intensive care with coronavirus is at the highest level in this second wave – at 98.Wales

Links:

<https://gov.wales/higher-level-restrictions-come-force-control-coronavirus>