



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein Cyf/ Our ref ATISN 14640

14 January 2021

Dear,

ATISN 14640 – Rationale behind latest Covid Restrictions

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 08 December. You requested information regarding the latest lockdown restrictions on pubs and restaurants and the reasoning behind them, specifically:

- 1. Why can I buy a takeaway from a restaurant but not buy a bottle of wine to take from the same place?*
- 2. What is the logic behind the 6pm closing time*
- 3. Was a decision taken to provide advantages to the larger retailers where I can buy alcohol up to 10pm?*

Our Response

Regarding Question 1 and 3: Hospitality settings, including restaurants, cafés, pubs, and bars with a licence for off-sales can continue to sell alcohol up until 22:00 as part of a takeaway offer.

Regarding Question 2: Welsh Government decisions are informed by the latest available scientific evidence, which is published by the [Technical Advisory Cell](#) and [SAGE](#) on their respective webpages.

A summary of the available scientific evidence relating to the restrictions on hospitality and entertainment is available at the following links:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/technical-advisory-group-statement-regarding-non-pharmaceutical-interventions-in-the-pre-christmas-period.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-cell-summary-advice-27-november-2020>

The effect of drinking alcohol – particularly drinking too much alcohol – can make people engage in more risk-taking behaviours. It can also make it harder for people to recall where they have been and who they were in close contact with if they are asked by contact tracing teams in the event someone tests positive. Coronavirus thrives when we come together and there was always a risk that as people came together to celebrate Christmas, they would catch or spread the virus. It was therefore important that in the run-up to 23 December, we did everything we could to make sure rates are low. We also know that as the consumption

of alcohol increases, social distancing and the perception of risk decreases. Wherever people mix, there's a risk of coronavirus being passed on.

As a result, the restrictions have been strengthened to focus on places where we meet and where coronavirus thrives. We have also drawn on the recent evidence from the UK Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies, which examined which interventions have had the biggest impact on the virus in this paper:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939057/S0905_191120_O_Four_Nations_Autumn_Interventions_V1_.pdf. It concludes the measures in Scotland's level three and England's tier three are effective, many of which are already in place in Wales, and we have adapted the other measures to a Welsh context:

- In hospitality – there will be no on-site sale of alcohol and premises will have to close at 6pm (this is in line with Scotland's level three measures; in tier three areas in England all hospitality premises are closed except for takeaway)
- Indoor entertainment and visitor attractions must close.

These regulations were reviewed on 17 December and subsequently every three weeks.

To support businesses Welsh Government have made a further £340m package of support available through the Economic Resilience Fund. This includes a £180m fund targeted at hospitality and tourism businesses.

Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
CARDIFF,
CF10 3NQ
Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
CHESHIRE,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,