

Greens call for closure of large venues to protect the NHS amid rising Omicron cases



Green Party

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With record numbers of Covid cases recorded for the second day running, the Green Party has called for large venues, which currently require Covid passes to be accessed, to be closed, and called for additional safety measures in the hospitality sector.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said,

“As the government’s scientists have said, unless we reduce the spread of Omicron, the NHS risks being overwhelmed not because of people going into hospital but by the large number of NHS staff who themselves have to isolate due to Covid.

“To prevent that happening, large events that currently require Covid passes to be accessed should be closed, to reduce the rate of transmission among large crowds. Those venues required to close, such as large music and sporting venues, should receive appropriate support.

“We welcome the strengthening of social distancing measures to ensure hospitality venues are safe that are being introduced in Wales and we believe these should be extended to England as well. But with a virus that is doubling in less than two days it makes no sense to delay these until after Christmas. The Government must not repeat the mistakes of earlier in the pandemic by once again being too slow to respond.”

Adrian Ramsay also called for financial support for the hospitality sector and criticised the Government’s failure to take responsibility for the impact of its own advice on businesses and the financial impact on individuals. He said:

“By putting responsibility for doing the right thing onto individuals and onto small businesses but without any financial support, the Government is leaving them high and dry.

“The current lack of clarity and lack of a support package is making life

impossible for our hospitality sector. And given how many workers are employed without proper sick pay, the lack of financial support for self-isolation amounts to punishing people for following the rules.”

“After nearly two years of chaos in their pandemic response, it’s time the Government took a clear line and ensured that our much-loved hospitality venues get the support they need, including through grants, business rate relief and flexibility on loan repayments, and that people aren’t penalised for doing the right thing.”

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