

UK-wide Christmas arrangements agreed by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations

The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations have today agreed on joint arrangements for an easing of social restrictions that will allow friends and loved ones to reunite over the Christmas period.

All four parts of the UK have signed off an aligned approach allowing up to three households to form a 'Christmas bubble' from December 23 to 27.

Individuals will also be able to travel between tiers and across the whole of the UK without restriction within the five-day period, for the purposes of meeting with their bubble. Those travelling to and from Northern Ireland will be permitted to travel an additional day either side.

The approach was agreed by Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, and the First Ministers of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland during a COBR meeting he chaired this afternoon.

Speaking following the meeting, Mr Gove said:

The UK-wide agreement reached today will offer hope for families and friends who have made many sacrifices over this difficult year.

We know that the Christmas period this year will not be normal, but following constructive discussions between the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, families and friends will now have the option to meet up in a limited and cautious way across the UK should they wish.

In coming to this agreement, we have listened to scientific and clinical advice on how best to minimise the risk and reach a balanced and workable set of rules that we hope will allow people to spend time together at this important time of year.

Each administration will clarify their own rules on support bubbles and extended households in due course. In England, support bubbles will continue to be counted as one household.

Christmas bubbles will be able to gather in private homes, attend places of worship together and meet in outdoor public places. Beyond this, people should continue to follow all other local restrictions in the area. Guidance is being published on Gov.uk.

As part of the agreement, each administration will be reminding households

that they should remain alert to the risks still posed by the virus and consider how, where possible, they can celebrate and support more isolated friends and loved ones through alternative approaches such as video calls and meeting outdoors.

When following these new rules, people are reminded to continue to take personal responsibility to limit the spread of the virus and protect loved ones, particularly if they are vulnerable. Forming a bubble for those who are vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable carries additional risks.

The four parts of the UK will work together to communicate these new measures across the country and ensure that communities are aware of any variations in approaches.

Details of the new measures can be found in the [joint statement](#), agreed today.