

EMAIL 1

From: [redacted]

Sent: 20 November 2020 20:32

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: UK CMOs view on proposals for Christmas

[redacted]

The Cabinet Secretary will want to be aware that the UK CMOs met earlier today to discuss, amongst other issues, the approach to the winter festival. We had been asked to consider collectively a response to the following questions. My understanding is that this is with a view to agreeing and potentially announcing a four nation approach to this period at some point in the next 7 days. The questions posed were:

- a. Composition of festive bubbles:
 - i. Are you content that a 3 household limit is a proportionate compromise? Are there ways in which we can further reduce the risk of transmission chains e.g. by encouraging people to socially distance within their bubble if they are only visiting for a short time?
- b. Duration:
 - i. Do you consider, on balance, that a shorter period (4-5 days) would reduce the risk of transmission overall?
 - ii. Recognising that there is likely to be a mass movement of people at a time when public transport is operating at reduced capacity, should further health measures be considered on the travel network over this period?
- c. Restrictions on where festive bubbles can meet:
 - i. Do you consider the risk of allowing bubbles to meet in hospitality and other settings to be greater than the risk of people gathering in small homes?
 - ii. Are there other mitigations that we should take to reduce the risk of transmission during this time e.g. temporarily restricting social contact in other indoor settings across all tiers?
- d. Guidance:
 - i. Are you content with the proposed tone and approach to Christmas easing? Are there specific elements that you think we should draw out further in guidance?

The UK CMOs view on the proposals (for Christmas only) is as follows:

In line with SAGE guidance, we should aim for the lowest possible prevalence in the build up to Christmas to reduce the risk. [Redacted]

- Our default position is for people to enjoy the winter festivities but to keep this risk as low as possible [Redacted]
- If people plan to join other households they should:
 - Have a **maximum bubble** of 3 household and people should not have multiple bubbles.
 - Meet for no more than five days around/over Christmas Day. [Redacted]
 - Bubbles should be able to attend COVID-secure religious ceremonies together. [Redacted]
- Bubbles attending hospitality venues will increase the chance of bubbles crossing and larger outbreaks [Redacted]. We would encourage a four nation approach on these policy decisions.
- These rules should be applied to all religious festivals – not just Christian ones.

I will be happy to discuss any aspects of this further with Cab sec should she wish.

G

[Redacted]

EMAIL 2

From[redacted]

Sent: 24 November 2020 13:10

To: [redacted]>

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: UK CMOs views on Cabinet Paper on Christmas

First Minister

I enclose the final version of advice agreed between UK CMOs on the Cabinet Office paper on Christmas:

UK CMOs views on the Cabinet Office paper are in red.

- Between 23 and 27 December, you can meet in an exclusive Christmas bubble composed of three households. Existing support bubbles in England count as one household. (There is agreement that bubbles can be a maximum of three households. [Redacted]. The CMO for England is content for a single support bubble to be considered one household for this period in the English context.)
- During this time you can travel between tiers and UK nations for the purposes of meeting your Christmas bubble. (Agree)
- You should travel to meet your Christmas bubble and return home within the designated window (23-27 December), unless travelling to/from Northern Ireland. (Agree [Redacted])
- You can meet your Christmas bubble in your home, a place of worship (Agree) or essential retail [Redacted] (in other settings you should continue to follow rules applicable in your nation). (Agree)
- When outside your home with your Christmas bubble, you should follow national gathering limits. (Agree)
- You can continue to meet people outside your bubble, subject to your area's gathering limits. (Agree)

Duration

Duration: we propose to apply these rules between 23-27 December based on advice that extending the window further will likely increase transmission and enforcement risks, particularly on New Years' Eve. While we would encourage

people to travel within that window, we intend to enable people to travel a day early (and stay in a hotel) if **[Redacted]**

[Redacted].

CEV guidance

You are still able to form a Christmas bubble if you are clinically extremely vulnerable but it does involve greater risks for you. You will minimise your risk of infection if you limit social contact with people that you do not live with.

Forming a Christmas bubble is a personal choice and should be balanced against the increased risk of infection. If you do decide to form a Christmas bubble you can take extra precautions set out in Guidance for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable at Christmas. Others in your bubble should be mindful of your increased risks and be extra vigilant in the days before you get together. [1]

[Redacted]. The UK CMOs were generally content with the language in the guidance but this should be finalised between officials.

First Minister

I enclose the final version of advice agreed between UK CMOs on the Cabinet Office paper on Christmas:

UK CMOs views on the Cabinet Office paper are in red.

- Between 23 and 27 December, you can meet in an exclusive Christmas bubble composed of three households. Existing support bubbles in England count as one household. **(There is agreement that bubbles can be a maximum of three households. Given the different starting points on the definitions of bubbles, it may be prudent that the decision on the definition of households in relation to bubbles can be adjusted nationally. The CMO for England is content for a single support bubble to be considered one household for this period in the English context.)**
- During this time you can travel between tiers and UK nations for the purposes of meeting your Christmas bubble. **(Agree)**
- You should travel to meet your Christmas bubble and return home within the designated window (23-27 December), unless travelling to/from Northern Ireland. **(Agree but only with the change outlined below)**

- You can meet your Christmas bubble in your home, a place of worship (Agree) or essential retail (The UK CMOs are cautious about this, especially if it results in large groups) (in other settings you should continue to follow rules applicable in your nation). (Agree)
- When outside your home with your Christmas bubble, you should follow national gathering limits. (Agree)
- You can continue to meet people outside your bubble, subject to your area's gathering limits. (Agree)

Duration

Duration: we propose to apply these rules between 23-27 December based on advice that extending the window further will likely increase transmission and enforcement risks, particularly on New Years' Eve. While we would encourage people to travel within that window, we intend to enable people to travel a day early (and stay in a hotel) if [Redacted]

The UK CMOs believe this should in exceptional circumstances only.

CEV guidance

You are still able to form a Christmas bubble if you are clinically extremely vulnerable but it does involve greater risks for you. You will minimise your risk of infection if you limit social contact with people that you do not live with.

Forming a Christmas bubble is a personal choice and should be balanced against the increased risk of infection. If you do decide to form a Christmas bubble you can take extra precautions set out in Guidance for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable at Christmas. Others in your bubble should be mindful of your increased risks and be extra vigilant in the days before you get together. [1]

The UK CMOs agree to the principle that CEV individuals can form bubbles in the same way as the wider population, but that there should be strong wording on how increasing social contact increases risk, and CEV people need to weigh up that risk when deciding how to spend Christmas. The UK CMOs were generally content with the language in the guidance but this should be finalised between officials.

[redacted]