

Ireland placed on Level 3 of the Plan for Living with COVID-19 - with special measures for a safe Christmas

From [Department of the Taoiseach](#)

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The government has today agreed the approach for easing restrictions, including a phased move to Level 3 nationally, with a number of exceptions in place for the Christmas period.

The exceptions for the Christmas period are designed to support people to have a meaningful Christmas, albeit different to other years. The main objective is to stay safe and keep the COVID-19 numbers down so that we can maintain the lowest possible level of restrictions into the New Year. Guidance and advice will be available on gov.ie, supported by communications campaigns. People are advised to plan their activities in advance, to limit their contacts throughout this period, to keep celebrations small, that outdoors is safer than indoors and to ensure good ventilation if indoors with other people.

The measures are as follows:

From 1 December, under Level 3, as set out in the Plan for Living with COVID-19:

- weddings with up to 25 guests are permitted (same as current provisions)
- funerals with up to 25 mourners are permitted (same as current provisions)
- no organised indoor events should take place, other than as provided below
- gatherings of 15 people may take place outdoors
- non-contact training may take place outdoors in pods of 15
- only individual training should take place indoors and no exercise or dance classes are permitted
- no matches/events may take place except professional and elite sports, approved inter-county Gaelic games, horse-racing and approved equestrian events, all behind closed doors
- gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools may reopen for individual training only
- nightclubs, discos and casinos should remain closed
- hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs may open with services limited to residents only
- non-essential retail and personal services may reopen
- people should continue to work from home unless absolutely necessary to attend in person
- public transport capacity is limited to 50%

From 1 December:

- households should not mix with any other households outside those within their bubble
- people should stay within their county apart from work, education and other essential purposes

From 4 December:

- restaurants and pubs operating as restaurants (serving a substantial meal) may reopen for indoor dining with additional restrictions, (including requirement for meals to be prepared on site, inside the premises). This includes access for non-residents to restaurants in hotels
- higher, further and adult education should remain primarily online

Adjustments for the Christmas Period

From 1 December:

- places of worship to reopen for services with restrictive measures, subject to review in January
- museums, galleries, and libraries to reopen
- cinemas to reopen
- wet pubs to remain closed except for takeaway/delivery

From 18 December to 6 January:

- households can mix with up to two other households
- travel outside your county to be permitted

From 7 January, the measures put in place prior to 18 December will apply, subject to ongoing review of the trajectory of the virus.

The measures for cross-border travel will be the same as for travel between all other counties, that is, from 1 December, people should stay within their county apart from work, education and other essential purposes while from 18 December to 6 January, travel outside the county is permitted.

It has further been agreed that the use of face coverings is now recommended in crowded workplaces, places of worship and in busy or crowded outdoor spaces where there is significant congregation.

Additional seasonal support through CRSS will be provided to qualifying businesses that will remain closed due to public health restrictions introduced by the government to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in recognition of the additional financial impact on those businesses of being closed at Christmas, which for many would be a particularly busy trading period.

The government also noted the progress of the HSE in building capacity across critical care beds and acute services, restoration of cancer and community support services and the actions taken to mitigate the immediate risks as a result of Winter pressures and COVID-19 case increases.

Work on the development of the Testing and Tracing capability has been intensive. Recruitment of test and tracing staff has been a priority and performance in test and tracing turn-around times continues to improve. Testing capacity is now 140,000 per week.

The first full meeting of the High-Level Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination took place on 23 November 2020. The Task Force will work with the Department of Health and the HSE to have a national COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy and Implementation Plan prepared for Government on 11 December 2020.