

UK COVID-19: NEW UK RESTRICTIONS UNDER “PLAN B” – IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS IN THE HOTELS & HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Dec 09, 2021

With 336,893 new COVID-19 cases reported in the seven days ending on 8 December 2021 (the highest since the week to 16 January 2021) and the concern around the transmissibility of the Omicron variant, the government has implemented “Plan B”.

WHAT IS “PLAN B”?

As part of its [COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021](#), the government clarified that if the data suggests the NHS is likely to come under unsustainable pressure, it has prepared a “Plan B” for England.

The government’s “Plan B” prioritises measures which can help control transmission of the virus while seeking to minimise economic and social impacts. This includes:

- Communicating clearly and urgently to the public that the level of risk has increased, and with it the need to behave more cautiously.
- Introducing mandatory vaccine-only COVID-status certification in certain settings.
- Legally mandating face coverings in certain settings (although this is now already a legal requirement on public transport and in retail settings).
- Possibly asking people once again to work from home if they can, for a limited period. However the government recognises this causes more disruption and has greater immediate costs to the economy and some businesses than the other Plan B interventions

WHAT NEW RESTRICTIONS ARE COMING INTO FORCE?

- With effect from 10 December 2021, masks must be worn at most public indoor venues (including cinemas and theatres), unless people are exercising, eating, drinking or singing.
- With effect from 13 December 2021, people should work from home if they are able to do so.

- With effect from 15 December 2021, COVID status certification is required for nightclubs or other large crowded spaces, including all unseated indoor venues with a capacity of 500 or more; all unseated outdoor venues of 4,000 or more; or any venue, seated or not, which contain 10,000 or more. It has been indicated that negative lateral flow tests may also suffice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS IN THE HOTELS AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

- Employers operating in the cinema and theatre sector are likely to be impacted by the mask mandate and may need to consider whether reduced audiences will mean that staff rotas need to be altered and, in a worst case scenario, whether a reduction in headcount is necessary.
- Businesses will need to be mindful that the introduction of COVID-status certification and the decrease in workers in city centres may well lead to a reduction in customers during what is usually a very busy period for the hospitality sector. This could mean that changes may need to be taken in relation to the workforce.

RELATED CAPABILITIES

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MEET THE TEAM



Laura Wild

London

laura.wild@bclplaw.com

[+44 \(0\) 20 3400 2357](tel:+442034002357)

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