

Coronavirus – hospitality industry asks customers to avoid house parties this weekend

A group of Scotland's restaurant and bar operators have pleaded with customers to stay away from house parties this weekend, after Scotland's National Clinical Director highlighted household mixing was a major driver of the upsurge in Covid infections.

Members of The Scottish Hospitality Group employ over 6,000 people in Scotland. The group warns that any further tightening of lockdown in the sector will lead to more illegal gatherings in homes across the country which could in turn force many pubs, restaurants and hotels to close their doors permanently.

SHG spokesman Stephen Montgomery, who runs two successful hotels in Dumfries, said: "Professor Jason Leitch was spot-on when he identified household mixing as the major cause of increased infections.

"Unlike in bars and restaurants, where there is track and trace, social distancing, PPE and strict hygiene rules, if you go to a house party this weekend, you're just playing Covid

Russian Roulette.

“We’re urging people to follow the official advice not to take the huge risk of socialising at home, and to do so safely in Scotland’s bars and restaurants, where they can be sure that all possible precautions have been taken to look after them properly.

“Scotland’s bars and restaurants are a vital part of the fight against the spread of Covid. If we are locked down or the restrictions on us are tightened, it will simply drive more people to socialise at home, with the inevitable increases in Covid that will follow.”

Kenny Blair, founder of Buzzworks, which operates 12 venues in Ayrshire, and Scotts at South Queensferry said: “Publicans and restaurateurs have followed Scottish Government guidance to the letter. We are a vital part of the solution to combatting Covid.

“We’re the only safe place people can socialise, and the figures from SHG members – over 1.8million customers served since July, with only 17 confirmed cases – show that the Government’s own measures are working really effectively.

“However, the clear feedback we are getting from many in our industry right across the country is that they are only just managing to stay afloat. If we have further restrictions imposed or, God forbid, another lockdown, it will be Armageddon for a sector which employs more young Scots people than any other.”

The Scottish Hospitality Group comprises many of the country’s largest and best-known restaurant and bar businesses, including The DRG Group, Buzzworks Holdings, Signature Pubs, Montpeliers, Manorview Group, Lisini Pub Co, Caledonia Inns, G1 Group, Siberia Bar & Hotel, Mor-Rioghain Group, and Caledonian Heritable.



Black Ivy. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com