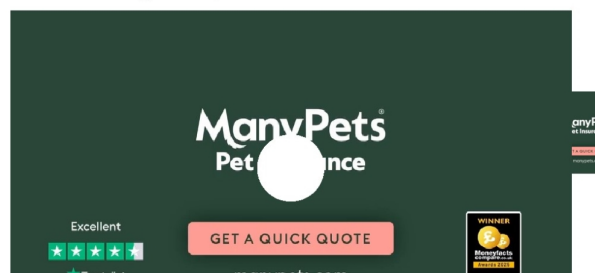


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Politics Boris Johnson

Boris Johnson 'broke Covid lockdown rules' with Downing Street parties at Xmas

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NEWS By [Pippa Crerar](#) Daily Mirror Political Editor
22:16, 30 Nov 2021 Updated 13:49, 01 Dec 2021



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BORIS JOHNSON ENJOYS CHRISTMAS MARKET NEAR DOWNING STREET

Boris Johnson and his Downing Street staff have been accused of breaking Covid rules by attending parties at Number 10 in the run-up to last Christmas.

Article continues below

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The Prime Minister gave a speech at a packed leaving do for a top aide last November when the country was in the grip of its second lockdown.

Article continues below

Then just days before Christmas, with London in tier 3 restrictions, members of his top team held their own festive bash in Downing Street.

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Officials knocked back glasses of wine during a Christmas quiz and a Secret Santa while the rest of the country was forced to stay at home.

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PRIVACY



Boris Johnson said on Tuesday that Christmas parties should not be scrapped (Image: POOL/AFP via Getty Images)

Around "40 or 50" people were said to have been crammed "cheek by jowl" into a medium-sized room in Number 10 for each of the two events.

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"It was a Covid nightmare," one source claimed.

The revelations come after top health chief Dr Jenny Harries warned that people should cut down on socialising this Christmas to curb future Covid surges.

But Mr Johnson rejected the idea today that festive parties should be scrapped, adding: "We don't want people to cancel such events."

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In explosive revelations, one source told the Mirror there were "many social gatherings" in Downing Street last year while the public faced restrictions.



Boris Johnson samples an Isle of Harris Gin (Image: AFP via Getty Images)

They even suggested there were “always parties” in the flat Mr Johnson shares with wife, adding: “Carrie’s addicted to them”.

Article continues belowAD

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There were also claims of a third, smaller gathering on November 13, the night Dominic Cummings walked out of No 10, “where they were all getting totally plastered”.

The PM had his own close brush with death when he was hospitalised with Covid in April 2020 – but it didn’t appear to change his attitude.



PRIVACY Boris Johnson's wife Carrie Johnson was addicted to the parties (Image: Andrew Parsons / No10 Downing Street)

Article continues belowAD

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Another source claimed: "While senior civil servants were urging caution and there was one message to the public, Prime Minister gave the impression that it could be very relaxed in No 10.

"He would either turn a blind eye or on some occasions attend himself while everyone else was in lockdown".

The official No 10 staff Christmas party was cancelled with officials said to have made do with a Zoom quiz instead.

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But the leaving do still took place on November 27 while the unofficial Christmas bash, which the PM did not attend, happened on December 18.

One legal expert claimed that the events could even have been punishable with a £10,000 fine.

READ MORE: Holding No10 Christmas parties could have been a criminal offence, top lawyer says

Downing Street did not deny the claims, but a spokesman said: "Covid rules have been followed at all times."

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A spokeswoman for Mrs Johnson denied she had held any parties at the flat while restrictions were in place, adding: "This is total nonsense.

"Mrs Johnson has followed coronavirus rules at all times and it is categorically untrue to suggest otherwise."



Behind this iconic door a festive bash took place, it has been claimed (Image: PA)
Article continues belowAD

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Last November, Mr Johnson plunged the country into its second national lockdown for four weeks with people asked to work from home and any indoor socialising banned.

The following month, London went into Tier 2 restrictions which prohibited households from mixing indoors.

On December 16, the capital, which had the highest Covid case rates in the country, moved to Tier 3 which banned all indoor mixing except in household bubbles.

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The only feasible legal way for either gathering to have taken place was if it was "reasonably necessary for work" under the regulations.

Downing Street staff have been classified as key workers throughout the pandemic.

PRIVACY were set up to be Covid secure, with perspex screens between desks and hand sanitising stations.

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The rule of six was regularly enforced in meetings and the number of people who were allowed to see the PM at any one time was strictly limited, while social distancing was in place.

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However, sources claimed the No.10 operation had tried to justify the gatherings because the attendees all worked in the same building.

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One said: "It's difficult to arbitrate because there's huge amounts of work going on - from time to time until the early hours of the morning.

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Follow Daily Mirror observed the rules, it's just these events happened occasionally that pushed it."

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But another source suggested that 'letting off steam' was not an excuse for the scale of gatherings that took place during the run-up to last Christmas. 403

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after he was pictured in a clinch with Gina Coladangelo in June 2021. ■ Nimco Ali, a close friend of PM's wife Carrie Johnson, stayed overnight with her and Mr Johnson during the peak of the coronavirus lockdown last Christmas.

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