

Sweden orders cafes, eateries to close at 11 p.m.

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Sweden's prime minister, Magdalena Andersson, on Monday ordered cafes, bars and restaurants to close no later than 11 p.m., urged people to work from home when possible and said distance learning was an option

in higher education to try to combat rising levels of COVID-19 infection.

Despite millions of [people](#) getting the vaccine, "we believe that the situation requires further measures over a period of time, in order to curb the spread of infection and reduce the burden on [health care](#) and care," Andersson said.

Sweden which has previously stood out among European nations for its comparatively hands-off response to the pandemic, is in the midst of "a fourth wave with a high spread of [infection](#) and high disease rates," Social Affairs Minister Lena Hallengren said.

Andersson said that the situation has "without a doubt worsened."

"Restrictions are not something we introduce lightly and we are aware that the past two years have been a trying for all of us in Sweden," Andersson said.

Head of the Swedish Public Health Agency Karin Tegmark Wise added: "We are in an extreme situation."

As of Jan. 14, cafes, bars and eateries must close at 11 p.m., a limit of eight people per group in these places is being introduced, anyone who can work from home should do so, and [distance learning](#) can be introduced in [higher education](#).

For people without a vaccination certificate, the government introduced a ceiling of 50 people for public gatherings and public events.

Authorities reiterated their calls to people to be vaccinated, with Andersson saying vaccination "is the most powerful (tool) we have against the spread of COVID-19."

For most of the pandemic, Sweden stood out among European nations for its comparatively hands-off response. The country never went into a lockdown or closed businesses, relying instead on citizens' sense of civic duty to control infections. Authorities have emphasized individual responsibility instead of government health measures.

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