



WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Interim review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020**

DATE **14 August 2020**

BY **Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister**

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020 place a series of restrictions on gatherings, the movement of people, and the operation of businesses, including closures. They require businesses, which are open to take reasonable measures to minimize the risk of exposure to coronavirus. They are designed to protect people from the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Welsh Ministers are required to review the need for the requirements and restrictions and their proportionality every 21 days. The last full review – the sixth – took place on 30 July and set out a phased approach for the next three-week cycle.

The scientific and medical advice shows that, overall, levels of coronavirus transmission in Wales are low. However, the situation in the rest of the UK, notably parts of England, and further afield is less encouraging.

As we move into the green phase in our traffic light system, with more and more premises, workplaces and venues now open, we need to make sure that people and businesses comply with the Regulations and adhere to guidance on operating in the ways we have agreed. One important element of the guidance for hospitality businesses and other higher risk premises has been the collection of contact details of customers and visitors. This is important to support contact tracers to reach people in the same venue as somebody who has contracted COVID-19 and minimize the risk of the infection spreading.

Many businesses and premises are collecting this information and we thank them for their efforts to keep Wales safe. Others unfortunately are not acting as responsibly. Nor do individuals always understand the importance of providing that information. Therefore, this week we will be clearer in the regulations that collection of contact

details for the purposes of contact tracing is a reasonable measure that we expect these higher-risk premises to take. Enforcement officers in local authorities will deal with any non-compliance using the strengthened enforcement measures announced last week.

I have also considered the latest evidence on face coverings. When it is necessary, we will require the use of face coverings in more settings as part of a planned response to any incident or outbreak. This change will be part of a package of measures we might introduce in an area and will be lifted when the situation improves and it is no longer proportionate on public health grounds. The position on supermarkets is unchanged and we positively recommend wearing face coverings in crowded settings where social distancing is difficult.

This week we have explored whether we can make changes to the rules about people meeting indoors. Given the increases in cases across the UK linked to this activity, and the resurgence of the virus internationally this is not something we are able to take forward this week.

However, I appreciate the pressures and difficulties that people are experiencing and from 22 August, subject to conditions remaining favourable, we will make some cautious changes. We intend to allow extended households to include up to four households as part of a single exclusive extended household. This will help address the difficult choices that some families have had to make, such as only having one set of grandparents in an extended household. We also intend to allow indoor meals for up to 30 people following a wedding, civil partnership, or funeral. This easement would enable up to 30 people to come together to mark these important life events.

Coronavirus has not gone away – we all have a shared and ongoing responsibility to keep Wales safe.