



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# **WRITTEN STATEMENT**

## **BY**

# **THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE** The Health Protection (Coronavirus, South Africa) (Wales) Regulations 2020

**DATE** 23 December 2020

**BY** Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services

Members will be aware that the Welsh Government made provision in the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) Regulations 2020 to ensure that travellers entering Wales from overseas countries and territories must isolate for 14 days (later reduced to 10 days) and provide passenger information, to prevent the further spread of coronavirus. These restrictions came into force on 8 June 2020.

On 10 July, the Welsh Government amended these Regulations to introduce exemptions from the isolation requirement for a list of countries and territories, and a limited range of people in specialised sectors or employment who may be exempted from the isolation requirement or excepted from certain provisions of the passenger information requirements.

Since then these Regulations have been kept under review and a number of changes to the list of exempt countries and territories have been made.

The Secretary of State for Transport reported to me this morning that a new variant of Covid-19 has been detected in South Africa. This variant is different to the UK variant reported to the WHO on 10 December (SARS-CoV-2 VUI 202012/01) but may share similar properties in terms of higher transmissibility. DHSC have reported there are two cases of the South African variant of Covid-19 in England.

A growing number of countries, including Germany and the Netherlands, have imposed travel restrictions on South Africa and we expect others to do the same. A decision was taken by the UK Government this morning to implement further travel restrictions on arrivals from South Africa. Most flights from South Africa route through airports in England.

The four CMOs met this morning to discuss this development, as a result of which it was decided that action should be taken to remove the sectoral exemptions for travellers

arriving from South Africa. All travellers arriving into Wales who have been in South Africa in the previous 10 days will be required to isolate for 10 days and will only be able to leave isolation in very limited circumstances. The same isolation requirements will also apply to all members of their household. These enhanced isolation requirements will also apply to persons already in Wales who have been in South Africa in the last 10 days and members of their households.

A further amendment will be made such that passenger planes and ships travelling directly from South Africa, and accompanied freight, will no longer be able to land or dock at Welsh ports.

The Regulations come into force at 9:00 am on Thursday 24 December, and they will be laid on Tuesday 29 December.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed.