

Government Response: The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions and Functions of Local Authorities) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Merits Scrutiny point 2: measures to ameliorate the economic impact and consideration to alternatives

The Regulations strengthened the restrictions in Wales to focus on places where people meet and where coronavirus thrives. We have drawn on the recent evidence from the UK Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies (SAGE), which examined which interventions have had the biggest impact on the virus. It highlighted the positive impact of measures in the Scottish level three system and the English tier three restrictions.

We already had many of these in place in Wales. Cabinet considered variations of further measures which were all broadly equivalent with those in England and Scotland. The Regulations being considered placed new restrictions for the hospitality sector, the entertainment sector and indoor attractions.

To complement other support available (e.g. the UK Government's Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme), a substantial support package of £340m for businesses materially impacted by the restrictions has been developed by the Welsh Government. The first element is a £160m Restrictions Business Fund which will provide businesses in the hospitality sector with payments of £3,000 or £5,000. Tourism, leisure, retail and supply chain business will also be eligible for this support if they have greater than 40% reduction in turnover during the restriction period. These payments will be administered by local authorities.

A second additional element of support is being made available to hospitality, tourism and leisure businesses or supply chain companies experiencing greater than 60% reduction in turnover during the restriction period. The eligibility checker for this new package went live on 11 December 2020 and the application process will open in January 2021.

Merits Scrutiny point 3: error in explanatory note

The Government is grateful for the notice of the issue. As the Committee notes, the correct dates were used in the Regulations themselves and in the Explanatory Memorandum.

Merits Scrutiny point 4: publication of summary integrated impact assessment

The summary integrated impact assessment was published on the Government's website on Monday 14 December.