



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restriction) (No.5) (Wales) Regulations 2020**

DATE **5 August 2021**

BY **First Minister Mark Drakeford MS**

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020 require that a review of the coronavirus restrictions is undertaken every three weeks. The most recent review was due by 5 August.

Overall transmission of Covid-19 has decreased across Wales in the past week, and the percentage of people testing positive has started to fall steadily. Evidence continues to suggest that the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths has been weakened by the vaccination programme. Pressures on the NHS have increased steadily over recent weeks. However, the number of people admitted daily to hospital with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 remains close to the lowest levels we have seen since the start of the pandemic.

On 16 July, we published an updated *Coronavirus Control Plan* setting out how we will move to a new alert level zero. As signalled at the last review of the coronavirus regulations, I can confirm Wales will move to alert level zero at 6am on 7 August.

At alert level zero, there will be no legal limits on the number of people who can meet, including in private homes, public places or at events. The few remaining businesses, which were required to be closed, including nightclubs, will be able to open.

In taking reasonable measures to minimise the risk of coronavirus, all those responsible for premises which are open to the public or a workplaces, will have more flexibility to tailor those measures in line with the results of their Covid-19 assessment and their specific circumstances.

Face coverings will continue to be required in most indoor public places, including on public transport, but they will not be a legal requirement in hospitality settings where food and drink is served. We will continue to encourage their use in those settings where this is practical.

We will also make some other changes:

- New core guidance has been produced which provides clear and concise advice for businesses, organisations, activity and event organisers and the public.
- The requirements in statutory guidance for specific premises to collect contact information is being removed. This will become one of a number of the reasonable measures which all businesses should consider.
- The regulations will provide clarity that there is no requirement for wearing face coverings on open air transport, such as boats.
- The (principal) Health Protection (No 5) regulations and the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Functions of Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2020 will be extended to Friday 26 November 2021.

With the move to alert level zero, three important rules will remain:

- Everyone must isolate for 10 days if they have symptoms of Covid-19 or if they have a positive test result.
- Adults and children aged 12 and over must still wear a face covering in most indoor public places in Wales, including on public transport, in shops and in healthcare settings.
- All those responsible for premises open to the public and workplaces must carry out a Covid-19 risk assessment and take reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus.

Coronavirus has not gone away. While we are able to take a significant step in moving away from complex legal restrictions, we must not abandon all the simple measures which have done so much to keep us all safe.

These include being fully vaccinated; getting tested and self-isolating if you have symptoms of Covid-19; meeting others outdoors wherever possible and keeping indoor areas well ventilated; keeping your distance when you can; washing your hand regularly; wearing a face covering in indoor public places and working from home whenever possible.

Taking responsibility means we can get back to doing the things we've missed the most. We all have a reason to keep Wales safe.

As the Minister for Health and Social Services set out in a Written Statement on 29 July, the regulations will also be changed on 7 August to remove the requirement for people who have been fully vaccinated (after 14 days has elapsed) to isolate if they are identified as a close contact. We will also remove the requirement for under 18s to self-isolate if they are identified as contacts.

To ensure those on lower incomes do not suffer financially, the Minister for Finance and Local Government announced in a Written Statement today an enhanced Protect offer to those asked to self-isolate on or after 7 August. Any applicant will be eligible for a payment of £750, increased from £500, over the ten day isolation period.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.