

SL(5)644 – The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 17) Regulations 2020

Background and Purpose

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) Regulations 2020 (the “International Travel Regulations”). The International Travel Regulations impose requirements on persons entering Wales after having been abroad. They include a requirement for persons arriving in Wales to isolate for a period determined in accordance with the Regulations. The requirements imposed by the International Travel Regulations are subject to exceptions, and certain categories of person are exempt from having to comply.

Persons entering Wales after being in one or more of the countries and territories listed in Schedule 3 to the International Travel Regulations are not required to isolate. The countries and territories listed in Schedule 3 are referred to as “exempt countries and territories”. Part 2 of these Regulations amends the list of exempt countries and territories to remove the entries for Cyprus and Lithuania.

A person who is subject to a requirement to isolate imposed by the International Travel Regulations is permitted to leave the place at which the person is isolating for a limited number of reasons. These exceptions to the requirement to isolate include an exception permitting a person’s participation in a listed sporting event. Part 3 of these Regulations amends the list of sporting events in Schedule 4 to the International Travel Regulations.

Part 4 of these Regulations makes various miscellaneous amendments.

Procedure

Negative.

The Regulations were made by the Welsh Ministers before they were laid before the Senedd. The Senedd can annul the Regulations within 40 days (excluding any days when the Senedd is: (i) dissolved, or (ii) in recess for more than four days) of the date they were laid before the Senedd.

Technical Scrutiny

No points are identified for reporting under Standing Order 21.2 in respect of this instrument.



Merits Scrutiny

The following points are identified for reporting under Standing Order 21.3 in respect of this instrument.

1. Standing Order 21.3(ii) – that it is of political or legal importance or gives rise to issues or public policy likely to be of interest to the Senedd.

We note the Welsh Government's justification for any potential interference with human rights. In particular, we note the Government's explanation that advice has been received from the Joint Biosecurity Centre that indicates that the risk to public health posed by the incidence and spread of coronavirus in Cyprus and Lithuania has increased. In the Explanatory Memorandum the Welsh Government states:

"The amendments contained in these Regulations do not change the engagement under the International Travel Regulations of individual rights under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights; the Government considers that they are justified for the purpose of preventing the spreading of infectious diseases and/or the interference is permitted on the basis that it is in pursuit of a legitimate aim, namely of protecting public health, and are proportionate."

2. Standing Order 21.3(ii) – that it is of political or legal importance or gives rise to issues or public policy likely to be of interest to the Senedd.

We note there has been no formal consultation on these Regulations. In particular, we note the following paragraphs in the Explanatory Memorandum:

"Given the serious and imminent threat arising from coronavirus and the need for an urgent public health response, there has been no public consultation in relation to these Regulations."

3. Standing Order 21.3(ii) – that it is of political or legal importance or gives rise to issues or public policy likely to be of interest to the Senedd.

We note the breach of the 21-day rule (i.e. the rule that 21 days should pass between the date a "made negative" instrument is laid before the Senedd and the date the instrument comes into force), and the explanation for the breach provided by Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Trefnydd, in a letter to the Llywydd dated 30 October 2020.

In particular, we note that the letter says:

"Not adhering to the 21 day convention allows these Regulations to come into force at the earliest opportunity, and in view of the changing evidence on risk in relation to this disease this is considered necessary and justifiable in this case."



Implications arising from exiting the European Union

None.

Welsh Government response

A Welsh Government response is not required.

Committee Consideration

The Committee considered the instrument at its meeting on 9 November 2020 and reports to the Senedd in line with the reporting points above.

