# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restriction) (No.5) (Wales) Regulations 2020** |
| **DATE**  | **27 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 26 August.

Overall transmission of Covid-19 has increased across Wales in the past week, and the percentage of people testing positive has also increased. 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.

As signalled during the last review, we will not be making any substantive changes in this review cycle. Some small amendments are being made to help provide more clarity to existing rules.

Coronavirus has not gone away. While we are able to remain at Alert Level Zero, 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 coronavirus; meeting others outdoors wherever possible and keeping indoor areas well ventilated; keeping your distance when you can; washing your hands regularly; wearing a face covering in indoor public places and on public transport, 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.

Some minor changes to the regulations will come into force on Saturday 28 August. These are:

* Exempting people attending wedding and civil partnership ceremonies from legal requirements to wear a face covering, bringing consistency with wedding receptions which are already exempt.
* Omitting Part 6 of the principal Regulations in relation to Provision of education in school to certain pupils when school premises are closed.
* Removing reference to the requirement to ensure 2m distancing under regulation 18A (election campaigning).
* Clarifying that references to close contacts under regulation 16 (reasonable measures) includes the same recently introduced exemptions in respect of regulation 8(2).

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.