# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **NHS Covid 19 App close contact notifications and self-isolation advice** |
| **DATE** | **Thursday 22 July 2021** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

I want to provide clarity on the position in Wales and actions required for NHS Covid 19 App users who are notified that they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid 19.

Case rates in Wales have been rising and consequently the number of contacts being asked to self-isolate, whether by a Test Trace Protect (TTP) contact tracer or via the NHS Covid 19 App, has also been increasing. However it is important to note that, at the present time, case rates and contacts are not at the levels seen elsewhere in the UK.

The NHS Covid 19 App continues to be an important supplementary tool to our TTP service and App users should continue to follow the self-isolation advice if they receive a notification. It is a legal requirement to self-isolate if instructed by the TTP service. The NHS Covid 19 App is not covered by this legal duty because the App is anonymous and the privacy of users is protected. NHS Covid 19 App users should follow the instruction to self-isolate to help minimise the spread of the virus.

The increase in notifications to contacts advising them to self-isolate illustrates that the NHS Covid 19 App is working effectively and doing what it is designed to do.

In August, as part of the next 21 day review cycle, we aim to remove the requirement for people who have been fully vaccinated to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive. We will also consider other potential exemptions, such as for those under the age of 18. The NHS Covid 19 App will align with these change when they are made.

Until any changes are introduced it is essential that anyone asked to self-isolate does so. I am aware that in the next few weeks there is the potential for critical services, such as the NHS and social care, to face additional pressures as a result of the number of contacts self-isolating increasing. We are working closely with relevant clinical and NHS bodies and social care partners to agree effective mitigation for direct patient and client facing and caring roles to see what more could be done in extremis where self-isolation of fully vaccinated close contacts could have a direct impact on patient safety.

Our regional Incident Management Teams who are responsible for Covid prevention and response planning have also been asked to consider whether isolation poses any risks to critical services and infrastructure and advise on any possible response that may be considered necessary.

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.