# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Covid-19 Infection Survey**  |
| **DATE**  | **28 March 2023** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The Covid-19 Infection Survey run by the ONS has played a very important role in the community surveillance of Covid-19 infections throughout the course of the pandemic.

The devolved governments of the UK have worked together with the study team to deliver world-leading UK-wide insights into positivity rates, levels of incidence, antibody levels and the impact of variants of concern. The survey has only been possible thanks to the participation of members of the public. We greatly appreciate all those who have been involved.

Unfortunately, as a result of decisions made by the UK Government, data collection under the current phase of the Covid-19 Infection Survey will now be paused while decisions are made about future surveillance models. I have written to the Secretary of State for Health to express my deep disappointment and concern about the loss of this important piece of surveillance.

This decision to discontinue the Covid-19 Infection Survey in its current form will reduce the data available to track the course of the virus in the UK and potentially make it more difficult for us to gauge the prevalence of coronavirus in our communities.

The delay in the UK Government confirming details of any new UK surveillance surveys also means there will be a significant break in the data series.

While it is important to continue our transition towards living safely with coronavirus, the pandemic is not yet over – we are currently experiencing another upturn in cases of the virus. We are continuing to invest in our excellent wastewater surveillance and Public Health Wales’ community and high-risk settings surveillance systems, including genomic sequencing. This will ensure we are maximising all the available surveillance opportunities available to us to closely monitor case rates and analyse data so we are able to respond quickly, should this be necessary.

We continue to work with the other nations in the UK to consider the future approach for UK surveillance studies alongside how we monitor a range of other infectious diseases that present a risk to the public’s health.