

SL(6)002 - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 7) Regulations 2021

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 those Regulations.

These Regulations amend Schedule 3A to the International Travel Regulations, which contains the list of countries and territories subject to additional measures. Non-exempt persons are prohibited from entering Wales where they have been in a country or territory listed in Schedule 3A within the last 10 days of arrival, pursuant to regulation 12E of the International Travel Regulations. Regulation 2 adds Maldives, Nepal and Turkey to the list in Schedule 3A.

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 of 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 Vaughan Gething MS,



Minister for Health and Social Services (as he then was), in a letter to the Llywydd dated 11 May 2021.

In particular, we note the following in the letter:

“Not adhering to the 21 day convention allows these Regulations to come into force at the earliest opportunity and continue the four nation approach to international travel; in view of the changing evidence on risk in relation to this disease this is considered necessary and justifiable in this case.”

2. Standing Order 21.3(ii) – that it is of political or legal importance or gives rise to issues of 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 following paragraph in the Explanatory Memorandum:

“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 Convention on Human 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.”

3. Standing Order 21.3(ii) – that it is of political or legal importance or gives rise to issues of 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 paragraph 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.”

Welsh Government response

A Welsh Government response is not required.

Committee Consideration

The Committee considered the instrument at its meeting on 7 June 2021 and reports to the Senedd in line with the reporting points above.

