# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restriction) (No.5) (Wales) Regulations 2020** |
| **DATE**  | **21 January 2022** |
| **BY** | **First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS**  |

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020 require a review of the coronavirus restrictions to be undertaken every three weeks. The most recent three week review was due by 20 January.

Since the emergence of the omicron variant, we have undertaken a review of the regulations every week. Coronavirus cases across Wales – measured by positive PCR tests – have been falling steadily over the last week. The latest results from the ONS Infection Survey also show a fall in the number of people testing positive for coronavirus. In the week ending 15 January, 3.7% of people in Wales tested positive for coronavirus, compared to 5.6% the previous week.

These figures give us confidence we have passed the omicron peak and we can continue to lift the alert level two protections, in line with our plan to lift the protections carefully and gradually.

Today, (21 January), we will move to alert level zero for all outdoor activities. This means:

* Crowds will be able to return to outdoor sporting events.
* Outdoor hospitality will be able to operate without additional reasonable measures such as the rule of six and 2m social distancing
* The Covid Pass will be continue to be required for entry to larger outdoor events attended by more than 4,000 people, if unseated, or 10,000 people when seated.
* The Covid Pass is required in all cinemas, theatres and concert halls which are open.

From next Friday, 28 January, we will complete the move to alert level zero, unless the public health situation changes for the worse.

This means:

* Nightclubs will re-open.
* Businesses, employers and other organisations must continue to undertake a specific coronavirus risk assessment and take reasonable measures to minimise the spread of coronavirus.
* The general requirement of 2m social distancing in all premises open to the public and workplaces will be removed.
* The rule of six will no longer apply to gatherings in regulated premises, such as hospitality, cinemas and theatres.
* Licensed premises will no longer need to only provide table service and collect contact details.
* Working from home will remain part of advice from the Welsh Government but it will no longer be a legal requirement.

The Covid Pass will continue to be required to enter larger indoor events, nightclubs, cinemas, theatres and concert halls.

The next three-weekly review will be carried out by 10 February, when the Welsh Government will review all the remaining measures at alert level zero.

We have been able to lift these protections thanks to the efforts of everyone in Wales and our vaccination and booster campaign.

It is important that everyone continues to follow the rules and the guidance to help keep themselves and their loved ones safe, including taking up the offer of a booster vaccine if they haven’t already done so.