



WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Interim review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020

DATE 27 August 2020

BY Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Health and Social Services

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020 place a series of restrictions on gatherings, the movement of people, and the operation of businesses, including closures. They require businesses, which are open to take reasonable measures to minimize the risk of exposure to coronavirus. They are designed to protect people from the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Welsh Ministers are required to review the need for the requirements and restrictions and their proportionality every 21 days. The last full review – the seventh – took place on 20 August and signalled changes being planned for this week if conditions remained favourable.

The scientific and medical advice shows that, overall, levels of coronavirus transmission in Wales are low. We continue to remain concerned about the developing situations across the rest of the UK and the rest of the world.

We are making changes to the regulations on Friday 28 August that will allow for visits to residents of care homes (adults and children), hospices, or secure accommodation services for children. Guidance has been prepared with the industry to manage risks and each place will put in its own arrangements for visits. This change clarifies these can take place within the rules, but it is for each institution to determine when they are able to facilitate this activity. Given the benefits to resident's well-being, I hope that many homes can quickly update their procedures to enable indoor visits to take place safely. However, I do appreciate the anxiety that some providers will have about this significant change, and that some may need a little longer to put in place arrangements.

Casinos will also be able to open, having put in place mitigations and adaptations to minimise risks. Contact details will be collected and numbers of patrons limited.

Following discussions with the police, we are also amending the regulations to prohibit the organising of an unlicensed music event (which means an event that is not licensed or otherwise authorised under the Licensing Act 2003) for more than 30 people. A breach of this prohibition will be an offence punishable by conviction and an unlimited fine or, as an alternative to conviction, by a fixed penalty set at £10,000. This provides our police with broadly equivalent powers to those being introduced at the same time in England. The police will still utilise the four Es approach of Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce in acting proportionately.

We have not made any recent changes to the rules of gatherings. People should not gather in groups of more than 30 people outdoors or meet with people outside of their household or extended household indoors. It is therefore an offence to do otherwise without a reasonable excuse, such as the limited cases set out in the regulations.

The Deputy CMO has considered these changes and advised they are proportionate and cautious measures that are consistent with the overall aim of controlling the pandemic.

Coronavirus has not gone away – we all have a shared and ongoing responsibility to keep Wales safe.