



Elin Jones MS
Llywydd
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
CF99 1SN

21 December 2021

Dear Elin,

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 24) Regulations 2021

I have today made these Regulations under sections 45C(1) and (3)(c) and 45P(2) of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. I intend to lay these and an accompanying Explanatory Memorandum once the statutory instrument has been registered.

In accordance with section 11A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1946 I am notifying you that this statutory instrument will come into force on 22 December 2021, less than 21 days after it has been laid. A copy of the statutory instrument and the Explanatory Memorandum that accompanies it are attached for your information.

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1946, I am also notifying you that this instrument will come into force before it is laid before the Senedd.

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the principal Regulations”).

The Regulations come into force on 22 December 2021, within 21 days of their laying. Not adhering to the 21-day convention allows these Regulations to come into force at the earliest opportunity.

Before their amendment by these Regulations, regulations 8 and 9A of the principal Regulations require all close contacts of a person who has coronavirus which is or may be the Omicron variant to self-isolate for a 10-day period. The exemptions that ordinarily apply to close contacts that satisfy particular conditions (for example, close contacts that are vaccinated) do not have effect.

These Regulations amend the principal Regulations to remove the distinction between close contacts of known or suspected Omicron cases and close contacts of all other positive

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

cases. All close contacts, regardless of the variant of coronavirus concerned, will not be required to self-isolate if they are children, have completed a course of doses of an authorised vaccine at least 14 days before the close contact takes place, are participating in a clinical trial in the United Kingdom, or are participating in a testing scheme.

The Regulations also provide that where a person comes within these categories but was under a requirement to isolate immediately before the start of the day on 22 December 2021 as a result of having close contact with a known or suspected Omicron case, the isolation requirement ends at the start of the day on that date.

The amendments are required to remove this requirement in response to rising Omicron cases and the likelihood of the variant becoming dominant in the near future. The regulations are therefore no longer proportionate to the risk posed and clinical management of Omicron cases.

Not adhering with the 21-day convention and bringing the Regulations into force before they are laid before the Senedd also allows the Regulations to come into force at the earliest opportunity to a. mitigate the impact of protracted staff absences on essential public services in Wales b; align our position in Wales with that of the UK Government to mitigate any cross-border issues or confusion; c simplify our approach to self-isolation to aid public messaging and compliance.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business, Sian Wilkins, Head of Chamber and Committee Services and Julian Luke, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD