

## **Government Response: The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 22) Regulations 2021**

### **Merit Scrutiny point 3: Welsh Government Response**

The summary impact assessment that was issued for the COVID pass has been updated in light of the changes to the provision of natural immunity. The updated version will be published shortly.

### **Merit Scrutiny point 4: Welsh Government Response**

Welsh Government and the UK Government agree that the unpredictable nature of natural immunity makes it unsuitable as a certification measure compared with vaccination and testing. The strength of the protective immune response to COVID-19 varies greatly from person to person, and although it is highly likely an individual will be protected from severe disease or death for a period post recovery from first infection, the duration of this protection will vary and the ability for these individuals to still transmit the virus has not yet been quantified.

Sage 99 noted that:

- There remain many uncertainties about the biological parameters of Omicron including the combination of transmissibility and immune escape which give it a growth advantage over Delta in the UK. Evidence continues to suggest a significant degree of immune escape, and much higher levels of reinfections are being seen with Omicron (8% to 9%) than Delta (around 1%).

A link to the paper is attached <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sage-99-minutes-coronavirus-covid-19-response-16-december-2021/sage-99-minutes-coronavirus-covid-19-response-16-december-2021>.

The COVID pass provisions relating to natural immunity and evidence of vaccination (including the formal definition of fully vaccinated) will continue to be kept under review as case rates change and as the vaccination programme continues to be implemented.