



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Cabinet meeting: 21 March 2022

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 21 March 2022.

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## Present

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## Previous meeting

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# Present

- Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS
- Rebecca Evans MS
- Vaughan Gething MS
- Lesley Griffiths MS
- Jane Hutt MS
- Jeremy Miles MS
- Eluned Morgan MS
- Mick Antoniw MS
  
- Dawn Bowden MS
- Hannah Blythyn MS
- Julie Morgan MS
- Lynne Neagle MS
- Lee Waters MS

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# Apologies

- Julie James MS

# Officials

- Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary
- Des Clifford, Director General Office of the First Minister
- Will Whiteley, Deputy Director Cabinet Division
- Toby Mason, Strategic Communications
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
- Madeleine Brindley, Special Adviser
- Alex Bevan, Special Adviser
- Daniel Butler, Special Adviser
- Ian Butler, Special Adviser
- Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser
- Sara Faye, Special Adviser
- Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser
- Owen John, Special Adviser
- Andrew Johnson, Special Adviser
- Mitch Theaker, Special Adviser
- Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
- Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)
- Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat
- Catrin Sully, Cabinet Office
- Tracey Burke, Director General, Education and Public Services
- Reg Kilpatrick, Director General, COVID-19 Crisis Coordination
- Judith Paget, Director General Health
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Skills and Natural Resources
- Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services
- Frank Atherton, CMO
- Rob Orford, Chief Scientific Adviser – Health
- Fliss Bennee, Co-Chair TAC
- Liz Lalley, Director Recovery and Restart

- Christopher Warner, Deputy Director COVID -19 Restart 21 Day Review
- Tom Smithson, Deputy Director COVID-19 Restart
- Michelle Morgan, COVID-19 team
- Dylan Hughes, First Legislative Counsel
- Neil Buffin, Deputy Director Legal Services
- Neil Surman, Deputy Director Social Partnership
- Sharon West, Head of Social Partnership Reform

## **Item 1: Minutes of previous meetings**

1.1 Cymeradwydd y Cabinet gofnodion y 14 Mawrth / Cabinet approved the minutes of 14 March.

## **Item 2: First Minister's items**

### **Ukraine**

2.1 Work had continued over the weekend with Local Authorities, agencies and the Third Sector on the practical arrangements for welcoming Ukrainian refugees to Wales.

2.2 Some thought was being given to suitable accommodation in Wales and it was noted that the Urdd had offered the use of one of its residential centres.

2.3 Free rail travel was being offered to all Ukrainian refugees, which was an extension of the Government's programme to offer free public transport to all asylum seekers in Wales.

2.4 It was noted that people wishing to offer accommodation would need to register with the UK Government's scheme and the information would then be passed on to the Welsh Government, as the super sponsor.

## **Item 3: Senedd business**

3.1 Cabinet considered the contents of the Plenary grid and noted that voting time was scheduled for 5:45pm on Tuesday and around 6.25pm on Wednesday.

## **Item 4: Coronavirus Restrictions (no. 5) Regulations 21 Day Review – 24 March**

4.1 The First Minister informed Cabinet it would not be possible to take decisions on the three week review of the Coronavirus Restrictions (no. 5) Regulations that day as there was a need to fully understand the information, which had only recently become available, and consider the latest public health figures later in the week.

4.2 Case rates were rising again, particularly in the over 60 age group, and COVID-19 related pressures on hospitals and specifically intensive care units (ICUs) had increased over the past week.

4.3 There would be a need to consider the impact of the new, more transmissible, BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron, waning immunity levels and changes in behaviour. As such, thought should be given to the public messaging to encourage people to continue to take precautions to help contain the spread of the virus.

4.4 Ministers agreed there was a need to make public the difficult decisions the Government would need to take to avoid the reasonable worst case scenario from becoming a reality.

4.5 It was agreed that Cabinet would meet again on Thursday to complete the review of the Regulations.

## **Item 5: Any other business**

### **Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020**

5.1 Cabinet put on record its thanks to all those who had delivered the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020. From today, all types of physical punishment, such as smacking, hitting, slapping and shaking, of children, was illegal. The new law would apply to everybody in Wales, including visitors.

### **Payment to unpaid carers**

5.2 Ministers were informed that there would be an announcement on Wednesday of a payment of £500 to each registered unpaid carer in Wales. The payment would be retrospective in recognition of the financial and emotional hardship experienced in 2021-22 due to the pandemic. People would have until 31st March to register as unpaid carers.

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