



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Cabinet meeting: 24 March 2022

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 24 March 2022.

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Present

Coronavirus restrictions

Present

- Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS (Chair)
- Rebecca Evans MS
- Vaughan Gething MS
- Lesley Griffiths MS
- Jane Hutt MS
- Jeremy Miles MS
- Eluned Morgan MS
- Mick Antoniw MS

- Hannah Blythyn MS
- Dawn Bowden MS
- Julie Morgan MS
- Lynne Neagle MS
- Lee Waters MS

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
- Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
- Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)
- Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat
- 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
- Frank Atherton, CMO
- Andrew Sallows, Delivery Programme Director, Health
- Rob Orford, Chief Scientific Adviser – Health
- Fliss Bennee, Co-Chair TAC
- Chris Roberts, Head of Behavioural Science – Health COVID -19
- Liz Lalley, Director Recovery and Restart
- Christopher Warner, Deputy Director COVID -19 Restart 21 Day Review
- Tom Smithson, Deputy Director COVID-19 Restart
- Dylan Hughes, First Legislative Counsel
- Neil Buffin, Deputy Director Legal Services

Item 1: Review of Coronavirus Restrictions (No. 5) Regulations – 24th March 2022

1.1 The First Minister introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to formally review the Coronavirus Restrictions (No. 5) Regulations.

1.2 Cabinet was reminded the restrictions relating to COVID-19 within the Coronavirus Control Plan were for the purpose of preventing, protecting against, controlling or providing a public health response to the incidence, spread of infection or contamination. There must be a threat to public health and the restrictions had to be proportionate in what they were intending to achieve.

1.3 It was recognised the information Ministers had received at Cabinet on Monday, about case numbers increasing again, was resulting in greater pressure on hospitals and specifically intensive care units, therefore Cabinet concluded there was a need move more cautiously than previously signalled and agreed to retain certain restrictions for the time being, with other protections being set out in public health advice. This reflected the recommendations of the CMO.

1.4 Cabinet agreed, from 28th March, the legal requirement for face coverings to be worn in retail premises and on public transport should be removed. However, to protect the vulnerable, the requirement for such coverings to be worn in Health and Social Care settings would remain in place. The wider use of face coverings would be set out in guidance.

1.5 In addition, businesses and organisations would still be legally required to undertake specific coronavirus risk assessments and take reasonable measures to minimise risks. This would allow them to take any necessary action to respond to the new, more transmissible sub-variant of Omicron, known as BA.2.

1.6 The requirement for people to self-isolate, if they tested positive, would be moved from law to guidance and unvaccinated close contacts of those people testing positive would no longer be expected to take such precautions. It was noted that the £500 self-isolation payment would continue to be available until June.

1.7 The aim was for those protections, which were currently remaining as legal requirements, to remain in force until the next 3 week review. Should conditions be favourable at that time those protections would move to guidance.

1.8 Cabinet agreed officials should proceed with the decisions taken by ministers.

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