

**The Welsh Government  
Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet  
15<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
(via Teams)**

Present: Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS (Chair)  
Rebecca Evans MS  
Vaughan Gething MS  
Lesley Griffiths MS  
Julie James MS  
Eluned Morgan MS  
Ken Skates MS  
Kirsty Williams MS  
Jeremy Miles MS

Hannah Blythyn MS  
Jane Hutt MS  
Julie Morgan MS  
Dafydd Elis Thomas MS  
Lee Waters MS

Officials: Shan Morgan, Permanent Secretary  
Des Clifford, Director General Office of the First Minister  
Will Whiteley, Head of Cabinet Division  
Toby Mason, Head of Strategic Communications  
Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser  
Madeleine Brindley, Special Adviser  
Alex Bevan, Special Adviser  
Ian Butler, Special Adviser  
Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser  
[NR] Special Adviser  
Paul Griffiths, Special Adviser  
Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser  
[NR] Special Adviser  
Gareth Williams, Special Adviser  
[NR] Special Adviser  
Tom Woodward, Special Adviser  
Christopher W Morgan, Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)  
[NR] Cabinet Secretariat  
Jonathan Scourfield, Specialist Policy Adviser  
[NR] Specialist Adviser for Education Reform  
Tracey Burke, Director General, Education and Public Services  
Andrew Goodall, Director General, Health  
Andrew Slade, Director General ESNR  
Reg Kilpatrick, Director General COVID-19 Crisis Coordination  
Frank Atherton, CMO  
Fliss Bennee, Co-Chair of TAC Cell.  
Tom Smithson, Restart Coordination

Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services  
Dylan Hughes, First Legislative Counsel  
Neil Buffin, Senior Lawyer  
[REDACTED] NR [REDACTED] CMO's office  
Liz Lalley, Deputy Director Recovery and Restart.

**Item 1: COVID-19 Further Restrictions**

- 1.1 The First Minister informed Ministers that he had called the meeting to seek the agreement of Cabinet to apply a circuit breaker to the whole of Wales to reduce the significant increase in the transmission of the virus.
- 1.2 The Regulations in place 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 Ministers were being asked to take a decision in principle at this stage to allow further work to take place to firm up proposals. Cabinet would need to meet early the following week to take a decision on substantive recommendations.
- 1.4 Advice from the Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Scientific Officer and the TAC all reflected that of the UK Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, to COBR, that the UK Government's proposals for a three tier system would not stop the rapid spread of the virus and a Circuit Breaker system was the preferred option.
- 1.5 Scientific advice was that a minimum of a two week lockdown was required, but three weeks was preferable. However, there was a need to consider that the longer the restrictions remained in place, the greater the economic, financial and social impact on the well-being of individuals.
- 1.6 New modelling from Swansea University suggested that a two week lockdown, similar to that of earlier in the year, had the potential to reduce the 'R' rate from around 1.4 to 0.8. This would be dependent upon the control measures remaining in place after the restrictions had been lifted.
- 1.7 Hospitals were reporting a significant increase in cases, with 90 people being admitted within the past 24 hours. The number of beds occupied by individuals with COVID-19 related symptoms now stood at 790, up from 500 the previous week. The 150 ICU beds were all occupied, 120 of which were by people recovering from routine appointments. It would be difficult to maintain this balance with the expected increase in COVID-19 cases.

**OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE - CABINET**

*Cabinet will wish to note that these minutes, except those items in italics, will be published in week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020*

- 1.8 Action already taken in Wales had slowed the rate increase when compared to other areas in the UK. For example, towards the end of September Bolton and Torfaen had similar infection rates, however Bolton was now reporting around 400 cases per 100k people, whereas the Torfaen figure was between 50 and 60.
- 1.9 There would need to be a discussion on the extent of the restrictions, but the preference was for a stay at home message for the two weeks to have the desired effect on the transmission rate. If the messaging was stay local, then the restrictions would have to be applied for longer to bring about the necessary reduction in transmission. It was recognised that either approach could impact the Senedd and Plenary sessions.
- 1.10 The Government's main priority would be to keep schools and childcare settings open, where possible, with the aim of supporting key workers.
- 1.11 Businesses would need sufficient time to prepare.
- 1.12 Cabinet agreed in principle to introducing a Circuit Breaker from Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October to cover three weekends.