

**OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE - CABINET**

*Cabinet will wish to note that these minutes, except those items in italics, will be published in week commencing 23 May 2022*

**The Welsh Government  
Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet  
12<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**Present:** Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS (Chair)  
Rebecca Evans MS  
Vaughan Gething MS (item 1)  
Lesley Griffiths MS  
Jane Hutt MS  
Mick Antoniw MS

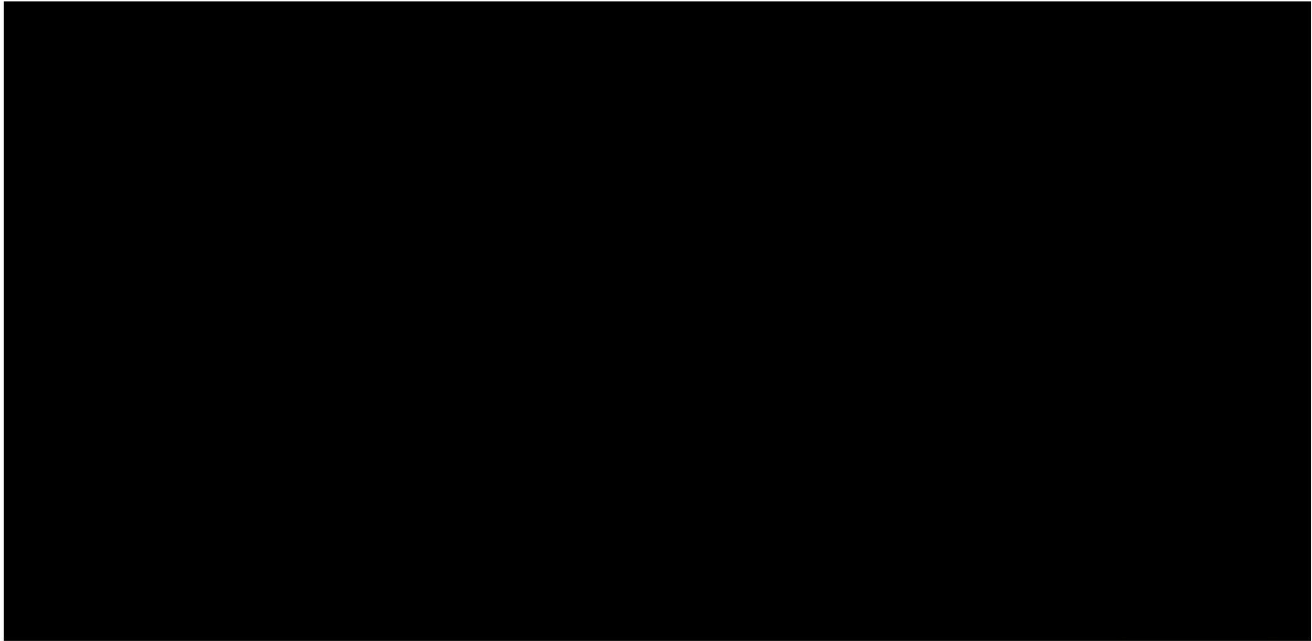
Hannah Blythyn MS  
Julie Morgan MS  
Lynne Neagle MS

**Apologies:** Julie James MS  
Jeremy Miles MS  
Eluned Morgan MS  
Dawn Bowden MS  
Lee Waters MS

**Officials:** Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary  
Des Clifford, Director 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  
Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser  
Owen John, Special Adviser  
Andrew Johnson, Special Adviser  
Tom Woodward, Special Adviser  
Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)  

<b>Name</b>
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 Cabinet Secretariat  
Tracey Burke, Director General, Climate Change and Rural Affairs  
Jo-Anne Daniels, Education, Social Justice and Welsh Language  
Reg Kilpatrick, Director General, COVID-19 Recovery and Local Government  
Frank Atherton, CMO  
Nick Wood, Deputy Chief Executive NHS  
Fliss Bennee, Co-Chair TAC  
Liz Lalley, Director Recovery and Restart  
Christopher Warner, Deputy Director COVID -19 Restart 21 Day Review  
Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services  
Dylan Hughes, First Legislative Counsel  
Neil Buffin, Deputy Director Legal Services



**Item 2: Review of Coronavirus Restrictions (No. 5) Regulations – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

- 2.1 The First Minister introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to formally review the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) Regulations.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The paper outlined the public health situation. Coronavirus was still prevalent across Wales and the wider UK. The latest results from the ONS Coronavirus Infection Survey estimated between 27 March 2022 and 2 April 2022, an average of 230,800 people in Wales had COVID-19. This equated to one in 13 people. These high levels of infection were being driven by the BA.2 sub-type of the Omicron variant.
- 2.4 The pandemic continued to cause pressure on the NHS. COVID-19 admissions to hospitals in Wales had increased since the beginning of March but had now plateaued to around 40 per day. Those in intensive care with the virus had remained lower than in previous waves.
- 2.5 As of 7 April, there were 1,372 COVID-19 related patients in hospital in Wales, although 535 of these were recovering. The percentage of confirmed cases, being actively treated for the virus, was currently around 14%. There were 17 ICU beds occupied by patients with confirmed cases of the virus, which had increased over the previous month, however this was significantly lower than in previous waves.

- 2.6 The latest modelling from Swansea University indicated that medium term projections from 1 April suggested a less challenging scenario, with up to 1700 beds occupied by COVID-19 patients, compared with around 2500 projected the previous week.
- 2.7 The advice from the CMO, included in the paper, outlined there was a need to maintain efforts to reduce transmission within hospital settings. Face coverings for visitors may have a small additional effect on reducing viral transmission but also signal the need for continued protective behaviours. Such coverings should continue to be used by staff and visitors until viral transmission in communities was significantly reduced.
- 2.8 *The paper outlined three options for the review. To retain the current legal restrictions, remove current legal restrictions as planned on 18 April and rely on public health advice, or keep one of the current restrictions but remove the other.*
- 2.9 Cabinet considered these options and agreed, from 18 April 2022, businesses and organisations would no longer be legally required to undertake a specific coronavirus risk assessments and take reasonable measures to minimise the risk of contracting coronavirus.
- 2.10 However, there would be a need to retain the legal requirement for face coverings to be worn in health and social care settings, for the time being, to protect the most vulnerable and staff.
- 2.11 *In terms of the priority to roll-out the spring booster vaccine to the very vulnerable, such as care home residents and those who were immunosuppressed, and people over 75 years old, it was agreed that officials should consider whether this could be extended to all disabled people with learning difficulties.*
- 2.12 *Ministers noted that since 1 April, the Health and Safety Executive no longer required every business to consider COVID-19 in their risk assessment or to have COVID-19 control measures in place and it was agreed that the Government should write to the Agency to make clear the requirements in Wales.*
- 2.13 Cabinet agreed officials should proceed with the decisions taken by Ministers and instruct lawyers accordingly

***Officials should proceed with the decisions taken by Ministers and instruct lawyers accordingly***