



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE**            **Review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions)  
(No.5) (Wales) Regulations 2020**

**DATE**            **22 December 2021**

**BY**                **First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS**

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020 require a review of the coronavirus protections is undertaken every three weeks. Since the last formal review of the coronavirus Regulations, Cabinet has moved to a weekly review in response to the rapidly evolving public health situation and the emergence of the omicron variant.

Today we have completed the latest review.

We are facing a very serious situation in Wales. A large wave of infections caused by the very infectious omicron variant is approaching. This form of coronavirus could infect large numbers of people in Wales, disrupting daily lives and businesses, and could cause an increase in the number of people who need hospital care in the coming weeks.

Wales will therefore move to alert level two from 6am on Boxing Day. These new measures for regulated premises and events have been designed to respond to this new variant. They will include new protections for hospitality businesses, including licensed premises, cinemas and theatres when they re-open after the festive period, and for public gatherings, including events.

Sporting fixtures will be played behind closed doors from Boxing Day and nightclubs must close.

From 6am Boxing Day, alert level two measures will be introduced, meaning:

- A general requirement of 2m social distancing in all premises open to the public and workplaces, where reasonable.

- The rule of six will apply to gatherings in regulated premises, such as hospitality, cinemas and theatres.
- All licensed premises will need to take additional measures to protect customers and staff, including table service and collecting contact details.
- Face coverings will be required in hospitality settings at all times apart from when seated.
- Large events will not be allowed indoors or outdoors. The maximum number of people who can gather at an indoor event will be 30 and 50 outdoors.

There will be an exception for team sports, up to 50 spectators will be able to gather outdoors, in addition to those taking part. There is also an exception for events involving children and young people under 18.

Last week, we confirmed alert level two measures for retail and workplaces. These will come into force at 6aam on Boxing Day.

Strengthened and updated guidance will be issued to help keep people safe in their own homes and when meeting others.

To stay safe we strongly advise everyone follows these measures:

- Limit the number of people visiting your home. If people are visiting, make sure they take a lateral flow test before they come.
- Meeting outdoors is better than indoors. If you're meeting indoors make sure rooms are well ventilated.
- Space out any visits.
- Remember the importance of social distancing and washing your hands.

There will continue to be a separate offence for large gatherings of more than 30 people indoors or 50 people outdoors.

Financial support of £120m will be available for nightclubs, events, retail, hospitality, leisure and tourism businesses affected by the move to alert level two. The Economy Minister will make a further announcement about this funding tomorrow.

A £3m Spectator Sports Fund has been announced to support venues and a £5.25m Cultural Winter Stability Fund will be available to support Wales' arts organisations, museums, libraries and independent cinemas through the winter months.

I gave an oral statement to the recalled Senedd this afternoon.