



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Cabinet meeting: 24 January 2022

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

First published: 11 March 2022

Last updated: 11 March 2022

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/cabinet-meeting-24-january-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

[Present](#)

[Previous meeting](#)

[First Minister's items](#)

[Senedd business](#)

[Coronavirus: Next steps](#)

Present

- Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS
 - Rebecca Evans MS
 - Vaughan Gething MS
 - Lesley Griffiths MS
 - Jane Hutt MS
 - Julie James 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

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/cabinet-meeting-24-january-2022.html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

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
- 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)
- 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
- Chris Jones, Deputy CMO
- Rob Orford, Chief Scientific Adviser – Health
- Fliss Bennee, Co-Chair TAC
- Liz Lalley, Director Recovery and Restart
- Tom Smithson, Deputy Director COVID-19 Restart
- Christopher Warner, Deputy Director COVID-19 Review
- Dylan Hughes, First Legislative Counsel
- Neil Buffin, Deputy Director Legal Services
- Terry Kowal, Senior Legislative Counsel
- Steve Vincent, Director Economic Infrastructure
- Helen Ryder, Deputy Director, Public and Integrated Transport

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/cabinet-meeting-24-january-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

- Ian Taylor, Specialist Policy Adviser

Item 1: Minutes of previous meetings

1.1 Cymeradwydd y Cabinet gofnodion y 17 Ionawr / Cabinet approved the minutes of 17 January.

Item 2: First Minister's items

COVID-19 related announcements

2.1 The First Minister informed Cabinet that the UK government had removed the public health protections in relation to international travellers. The unravelling of the surveillance system resulted in a major gap in the ability to sequence positive test results to monitor for variants of the virus and rapidly assess their impact.

2.2 Given the practical difficulties associated with diverging from the arrangements in England, with a number of Welsh people travelling through English airports and ports, the Welsh Government would reluctantly align with these decisions.

2.3 However, there would be more prominence in the Government's communications to encourage people to think of their own personal and family circumstances and how best they can protect themselves when considering whether to travel abroad.

2.4 In addition, given the emerging evidence that Omicron was a less severe form of the virus, particularly for people who had the vaccine and had their booster, and infectivity declined rapidly in the first 5 days, Public Health Wales had advised that a shorter isolation period, when combined with 2 consecutive negative lateral flow tests, would have nearly the same protective effect as requiring people to isolate for 10 days. Therefore, ministers were minded to

reduce the self-isolation period to 5 full days for those who test positive. An announcement would be made later that week.

Item 3: Senedd business

3.1 Cabinet considered the contents of the Plenary grid and noted business would continue in virtual format that week. No debates had been scheduled for Tuesday and voting time would be around 6:30pm on Wednesday.

Item 4: Coronavirus: Next steps

4.1 The First Minister introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to note the current Coronavirus situation in Wales and the UK. Ministers were invited to discuss the direction of travel and likely key decisions for the review of Alert Level 0 protections by 10 February along with longer term proposals.

4.2 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.

4.3 The latest case rates indicated that the number of people becoming infected were falling rapidly, and the 7 day average was around 501 in every 100,000 of the population. Test positivity was also falling and was now around 34.8%.

4.4 There was some uncertainty with the data due to the policy change in testing, but the latest ONS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey results for Wales also suggested the percentage of people testing positive had decreased in the most recent week. Similar signals of falls in rates of infection across Wales were also evident in waste water samples.

4.5 Furthermore, hospitalisation rates had decreased, with the overall COVID-19 bed occupancy at 1,037, which was 12% lower than the previous week. In addition, the number of coronavirus patients occupying critical care beds had fallen to 25, 5 lower than the previous week.

4.6 A further week of data was required to fully understand the impact on overall infection rates of children returning to schools settings. However, the plan was to ask schools to prepare for a return to the local infection control decision framework and prepare risk assessments. There would be no changes to the requirements for face coverings for the immediate future and those schools that had introduced staggered start and finish times would be able to continue until February half term.

4.7 In terms of planning for the review of the Regulations on 10th February, Ministers would need to decide, in light of the latest evidence available at that time, whether it was proportionate to retain any or all of the protections in law, or should there be a move towards guidance.

4.8 Cabinet favoured a move towards the protections being set out in guidance, providing the health conditions remained favourable, apart from the self-isolation requirements.

4.9 Ministers agreed that officials, in consultation with partners, should prepare a new transition plan to set out the direction of travel and key milestones in managing Coronavirus on an ongoing basis.

4.10 Cabinet approved the paper.

About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [Cabinet meeting: 24 January 2022](#) downloaded.

Go to <https://gov.wales/cabinet-meeting-24-january-2022-html> for the latest version.

This document may not be fully accessible, for more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

Get [information on copyright](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/cabinet-meeting-24-january-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).