



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## E-mail request

Our ref: ATISN 14713

Date: 2 February 2021

Dear

### Request for information ATISN 14713

Thank you for your request which I received on 30 December 2020. You asked for the following information:

Please provide minutes of meetings leading to the decision to put the whole of Wales in level 4 lockdown and all scientific information provided to The Welsh Government which was used in this decision.

I have provided my response at Annex 1 to this letter.

I have concluded that some of the information you have requested is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) – information readily accessible to the applicant by other means.

I have also concluded that some information held is exempt under Section 22 of the Act – information intended for future publication.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:  
Information Commissioner's Office,



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Parc Cathays • Cathays Park  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

## **Annex 1**

Welsh Ministers met on the 19 December to discuss the increasing prevalence of Coronavirus in Wales and the impact of a new variant. They agreed to amend the regulations to move Wales into alert level 4, to come into force at midnight on 19 December. Ministers also agreed to amend the provisions for extended households over the Christmas period to apply to Christmas Day only.

Cabinet conducts business as openly as possible. Minutes and papers are published following clearance at the next meeting but no sooner than six weeks after the meeting takes place and can be found at the following link <https://gov.wales/cabinet-meetings#Cabinetmeetings:2020>

Material is only withheld from publication when it:

- is commercially sensitive;
- relates to the Welsh Government budget or other budgetary or financial matters;
- contains or alludes to information received in confidence from a third party; or
- would otherwise cause substantial harm if disclosed.

The papers and minutes relating to the discussion on the 19 December is exempt under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) – information intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption subject to the public interest test. We have considered the public interest in releasing the information (now) against the interest in withholding it.

### **Public interest considerations favouring release of information**

There is a public interest in transparency being demonstrated by releasing the information with this reply.

### **Public interest considerations favouring withholding the information**

There is a public interest in Welsh Government providing information they hold that falls within the scope of an FOI request as quickly as possible. However, this needs to be balanced with the public interest in ensuring the maximum cost effectiveness as well as ensuring the release forms part of an established publishing process. Providing this information in response to an FOI request is not the most cost effective way of placing this information in the public domain, when it will be published in due course on the Welsh Government website.

The exemption under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) recognises that it must be reasonable to withhold the information until the date of publication. Given the necessary preparation and administration involved in publishing the information we consider that our publication timetable is reasonable.

I have concluded that on balance, the public interest is better served by withholding this information under section 22 of the FOIA at this time. The information in relation to 19 December is scheduled to be published week commencing 1 February 2020 and will also be available at the following link <https://gov.wales/cabinet-meetings#Cabinetmeetings:2020>

Links to the primary sources of, and summaries of, data used to support the decision to amend the 'The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020' are set out below. These also include links to further sources of information, such as the Technical Advisory Cell reports, which synthesise data from a range of sources including the UK Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

### **Welsh Government statistics and research on coronavirus**

#### **Coronavirus (Covid-19) related statistics and research**

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-related-statistics-and-research>.

**Welsh Government Survey of public views on the coronavirus (COVID-19): 4 to 7 December 2020 (published 14 December)**

<https://gov.wales/survey-public-views-coronavirus-covid-19-4-7-december-2020>

**Welsh Government Test, Trace, Protect (contact tracing for coronavirus (COVID-19)): up to 12 December 2020 (published 17 December)**

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-contact-tracing-coronavirus-covid-19-12-december-2020-html>

### **Office of the National Statistics data**

**Office of the National Statistics Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK: (24 December)**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveypilot/24december2020#percentage-of-those-testing-positive-for-the-new-variant-compatible>

### **Public Health Wales data**

**PHW Headline summary**

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection#!/vizhome/RapidCOVID-19virology-Public/Headlinesummary>

### **Technical Advisory Cell reports**

**A summary of what TAC do including publications of all reports**

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-cell>

**Welsh Government Technical Advisory Group Policy Modelling - December 2020 and January 2021 (published 18 December 2020)**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/technical-advisory-group-policy-modelling-december-2020-and-january-2021.pdf>

**Welsh Government Technical Brief: Viral Variant VOC-202012/01 (published 23 December 2020)**

[https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/technical-brief-viral-variant-voc-20201201-23-december-2020\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/technical-brief-viral-variant-voc-20201201-23-december-2020_0.pdf)

**Technical Advisory Group High level summary of evidence on costs and benefits and potential mitigations for measures to address Covid-19 in Wales (published 25 November 2020)**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/technical-advisory-group-summary-of-evidence-on-costs-and-benefits-and-potential-mitigations-for-measures-to-address-covid-19-in-wales.pdf>

### **Supporting documents for the decision**

**Chief Medical Officer Statement on Amendments to the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) Regulations 2020 (published 19 December 2020)**

<https://gov.wales/chief-medical-officer-statement-amendments-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-no-5>

**Restrictions within the alert levels: summary impact assessment (published 15 January)**

<https://gov.wales/restrictions-within-alert-levels-summary-impact-assessment>

**Welsh Government Impact Assessment Alert levels and restrictions in Wales: children's rights (published 21 December 2020)**

<https://gov.wales/alert-levels-and-restrictions-wales-childrens-rights-html>

**Welsh Government Impact Assessment Pre-Christmas restrictions 4 December 2020: summary impact assessment (published 14 December 2020)**

<https://gov.wales/pre-christmas-restrictions-4-december-2020-summary-impact-assessment-html>

### **Strategy documents**

**Link to the Welsh Government Strategy and evidence: Coronavirus page**

<https://gov.wales/strategy-evidence-coronavirus>

**Welsh Government Coronavirus Control Plan: alert levels in Wales (published 14 December 2020)**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/alert-levels-in-wales-simple-guide.pdf>