



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Reducing the self-isolation period to five days**

DATE **26 January 2022**

BY **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services**

Self-isolation remains an essential measure in helping to control the spread of coronavirus and protecting the population but longer periods of self-isolation can have a negative impact on people's mental health as well as affecting the delivery of public services through staff shortages and damage the wider economy.

Public Health Wales has reviewed the latest evidence around shortening the self-isolation period to ensure our policies in Wales continue to protect the public from the risk of onward transmission and minimises the impact of isolation on businesses, education and public services.

In light of the emerging evidence that omicron is a less severe form of the virus, particularly for people who have completed their primary course of the Covid-19 vaccine and had their booster and that infectivity declines rapidly in the first five days, Public Health Wales has advised that a shorter isolation period, when combined with two consecutive negative lateral flow tests, would have nearly the same protective effect as requiring people to isolate for 10 days.

I have therefore decided that from Friday January 28, the legally required isolation period in Wales for all those who test positive for Covid-19, including children, will be reduced from seven full days to five. The first full day of isolation is the day after the onset of symptoms or the day after a positive test if a person is asymptomatic.

To reduce the risk of people leaving isolation while still infectious, people will be strongly advised to start taking lateral flow tests on day five and to remain in isolation until they have had two consecutive negative results, 24 hours apart. These changes will also apply to more sensitive areas such as health and social care workers and revised guidance will be issued shortly.

The earliest a person will be able to leave isolation, therefore, would be on day six after a second negative lateral flow test.

We would anticipate this change in policy will help the majority of people leave isolation safely on day six, in the knowledge they are no longer infectious.

We will keep the isolation policy in Wales under review, particularly in the event of a change in the severity of omicron, a significant reduction in the efficiency of the current vaccine against serious illness, hospitalisation and death, or a new variant emerging.

We will continue to offer financial support through the Self-isolation Support Scheme to all those who are eligible and who lose income as a result of self-isolation. But we will return to the original payment rate of £500 in recognition of the shorter isolation period. Further information about the scheme, including eligibility, is available at: <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-support-scheme>

People who need support with essentials, such as shopping and pharmacy goods can continue to access help via their local authority and voluntary organisations.