



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE** Fourth 21-day review of preparations for holding the Senedd general election on 6 May

**DATE** 27 April 2021

**BY** Julie James, Minister for Housing and Local Government

I am making this statement under section 15(4) of the Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Act 2021 ("the Act").

On 21 April, the Welsh Ministers completed the fourth review of the preparations for the holding of the 2021 poll for the Senedd ordinary general election. We can confirm that for the purposes of this review the criteria we published on 5 March under section 12 of the Act (for determining whether it is necessary or appropriate to postpone the poll for the 2021 Senedd ordinary general election for a reason relating to coronavirus) have not been met.

This Written Statement provides further information on the status of the indicators under the published criteria at the time of the review.

### **Criterion 1: Public Health situation**

*Key Indicators:*

#### **Confirmed case rates.**

Cases per 100,000 of the population in Wales for the 7 day period ending 6 April was 17.6.

#### **Hospital capacity.**

As at 9 April, the average weekly hospital occupancy was 98, a 21% reduction from the previous period. As at 31 March, the average ICU occupancy was 15, a 6% reduction from the previous period.

**Feedback from local health professionals (including incident management teams or outbreak control teams).**

There was no feedback which would suggest holding the election is an unacceptable risk.

**Feedback from local authority leaders and other local partners.**

There was no feedback which would suggest holding the election is an unacceptable risk.

**Rates of change in the Alert Level Indicators.**

The Alert Level indicators were stable.

**The progress of the vaccination programme.**

As at 11 April 2021 1,572,752 first doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been given in Wales. 525,177 second doses have been given.

**Incidence of variants of concern.**

Variants of concern were not considered to pose an unacceptable risk in the context of holding the election.

**Criterion 2: Status of Preparations for the Election**

*Key Indicators:*

**Advice from the Welsh Government's Chief Medical Officer regarding the impact of the current spread of the virus on the safe running of the poll.**

For the fourth review, the Chief Medical Officer was again invited to report by exception by raising any changes to the advice provided for the third review of preparations.

The Chief Medical Officer has confirmed that there are no new issues to raise at this time.

**The timing of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections.**

The Police and Crime Commissioner elections are still scheduled for 6 May.

**Feedback from Returning Officers, the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders, for example relating to the availability of staff and venues or capacity to process absent votes.**

In the fourth review, we have again asked the electoral community to report to us by exception, if for example there are material new or different issues or conclusions in relation to holding the election in a safe way on 6 May which should be brought to the attention of Welsh Ministers.

Feedback from Regional Returning Officers and representatives from the Police indicated there were no new issues to raise or report.

There has been no feedback from other stakeholders to suggest that there have been any developments which would impact upon the safe running of the poll.

As the criteria for postponement have not been met, full preparations for the election on 6 May will continue.

We are continuing to support Returning Officers and electoral administrators as they continue with preparations to reduce the risks associated with running an election during a pandemic, such as implementing social distancing and hygiene measures at polling stations and count venues.

In light of changes to The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020, we have given further consideration to our [elections guidance](#) including the specific [guidance on election campaigning](#). As outdoor meetings of fewer than 30 people will be permitted from 26 April, the use of street stalls as a campaigning activity will be permitted subject to restrictions. The regulations and guidance have been updated accordingly.

The fourth review was the final assessment to be required under Section 15(4) of the Act. Ministers will continue to monitor the situation, as in extremis, the Senedd could make a decision, subject to the agreement of 40 out of 60 Members, to postpone the poll at any time up to dissolution on 29 April. However, as outlined in this Written Statement, based on the information available the Welsh Government's firm intention at this point remains for the election to be held on 6 May as planned.