

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance

The restrictions during our gradual move out of lockdown.

You are here:

- [Home](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [All announcements](#)
- [Written Statement: Implementation of the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021 \(22 March 2021\)](#)

CABINET STATEMENT

Written Statement: Implementation of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (22 March 2021)

Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government

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I am pleased to inform Members that I have made the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (Commencement No. 3 and Transitional Provision) (Wales) Order 2021, the final commencement Order I will be making this Senedd term in respect of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the 2021 Act”).

This commencement Order will bring into force, on 1 May 2021, all provisions in sections 47 and 49 of, and Schedule 4 to, the 2021 Act not yet in force.

From 1 May, local authorities will be required to make arrangements to ensure their meetings are capable of being held remotely.

Local authorities in the context of section 47 are principal councils, community councils, fire and rescue authorities, National Park authorities and port health authorities (for a port health district in Wales constituted under section 2 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984). A principal

council will also be required to make arrangements in respect of attendance at meetings of its executive.

In addition, changes to the way in which meeting documents are accessed and summonses are sent will apply from 1 May. The new regime, which will bring meeting procedures into the 21st century, will largely be based on the temporary regime introduced by the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020. Those Regulations only make provision in relation to meetings held before 1 May 2021. From that date, the right of the public and the press to attend meetings will be restored, although that will be subject to any continuing public health regulations.

I have also made the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Decisions, Documents and Meetings) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 which will also apply from 1 May onwards.

These Regulations amend the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Decisions, Documents and Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2001 to reflect the fact that executive meetings may be held partially or fully remotely. They also make other changes relating to executive meetings and executive decisions, including complementary and supporting amendments so as to require documents related to such meetings and decisions to be published electronically

They provide flexibility to enable local authorities to operate safely, effectively and lawfully, while retaining the principles of openness and accountability to the public. This includes enabling meetings to be conducted on the basis of full or partial remote attendance and by making provision about the electronic publishing of certain documents.