

Written Ministerial Statement

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The Executive Office

DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE ON COVID-19, 1 JULY 2021

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The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Executive received an update today on the progression of the Covid-19 epidemic and, in particular the continued advancement of the Delta variant which now accounts for 75% of the cases here.

This increase in the Delta variant and the case numbers associated with it are very worrying and we will continue to monitor the situation closely. We will have a particular focus on the hospitalisations resulting from the increase in cases and the potential pressure on our health service.

After very careful consideration we have decided to move forward on a select number of areas that focus largely on relaxations in the outdoors environment, which we know to be associated with lower risk.

The Executive has decided that from 2 July, the cap on outdoor gatherings will be removed and the maximum number permitted will be determined by the risk assessment carried out for the venue.

From 5 July all gatherings, indoors and outdoors (not including domestic settings) will now only be subject to a risk assessment if they have more than 15 participants for indoors, or more than 30 participants for outdoors.

Live music will be permitted at licensed and unlicensed hospitality businesses that sell or provide food and/or drink for consumption on the premises. This will be at ambient level only to allow conversation at normal levels and with suitable mitigations in place, such as screens.

Music will be permitted at outdoor events with no restriction on volume.

The number of households permitted to meet outdoors at private dwellings will be increased from 3 to 5, with the maximum number of people remaining at 15, including children.

The Executive has also approved a restart of overnight residential stays for children and young people across all sectors.

We are carrying out a review of the current position on our Pathway out of Restrictions and at next week's Executive meeting we will consider the sequencing of further relaxations and the process by which we hope to move forward over the summer, in line with the most up-to-date data.

We continue to ask that everyone comes forward to receive their vaccine as soon as possible and please keep both appointments. We urge employers to facilitate workers getting their vaccines.