

# Written Ministerial Statement

*The content of this written ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Ministers. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.*

## The Executive Office

### DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE ON COVID-19, 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

*Published on 24 September 2021.*

**Mr Givan (The First Minister) and Mrs O'Neill (The deputy First Minister):** The Executive arrived at a number of decisions today.

We will seek to finalise the Executive's autumn-winter Covid Contingency Plan at our meeting on 7 October.

On the areas of numbers at domestic settings, the ban on large house parties and raves, the need to be seated to consume food/drink, and the need to be seated at indoor music events, we will review the relevant data at 7<sup>th</sup> October, not introducing relaxations in these areas before 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Over the next few days we will undertake further work on what mitigations and measures would bring us to a position where we can make relaxations in the area of social distancing. With the case numbers still high, and the economic pressure on those businesses impacted by the remaining restrictions still being felt acutely, particularly across the arts, culture and hospitality sectors, we want to work to enable them to reopen to their maximum capacity as safely as possible and to remain open.

To facilitate this we are going to have further focused discussions with sector representatives on how we can work together to achieve this in line with the autumn winter planning needs. The sectors have some ideas we want to explore in more detail. We will meet again on Monday to discuss this issue further.

On international travel, we have decided to remove the requirement for Pre-Departure Testing for fully vaccinated arrivals from non-red list countries. This will come into force at 4am on 4 October.

Earlier this week we visited a hospital, and whilst there we listened to the medical and healthcare workers. We heard their worries and concerns and their pleas for us to take action now to avoid adding to the pressure they are already under, which we anticipate increasing significantly over the winter period.

As we enter this period, which is traditionally a tough time for our health sector, we ask you to please, get your first and second vaccines, if you are eligible for a booster please avail of that when it is offered to you. Every single person taking the vaccine makes a difference.

Continue to wear your face coverings, to wash your hands, and when meeting people indoors ensure the space is well ventilated.

Help us to help our medical and healthcare staff to get through this winter by keeping yourselves safe.