



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

ATISN 15434

16 September 2021

Dear

ATISN 15434 – Rules for testing people returning from Amber list countries

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 18 August. You requested the following -

- *The scientific data and advice, utilised by the First Minister of Wales, to finalise the rules for testing those people returning from Amber listed countries.*
 - (a) *Justification for rules applied to unvaccinated people.*
 - (b) *Justification for rules applied to fully vaccinated people, those who have been administered 2 doses.*
- *The amount being paid by the Welsh Government to Corporate Travel Management (CTM), with reference to the contract for carrying out COVID tests for travellers returning from Amber listed countries.*

Response

In regard to your request for information informing decisions in July and August 2021 to implement different arrangements for specified categories of fully vaccinated people arriving from amber-list countries, the Welsh Government holds information relevant to your request.

However, this is considered to be exempt from disclosure as it relates to the formulation of government policy (section 35(1)(a) of the FOI Act). In line with the terms of this exemption, we have also considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you this information and have concluded that it would not be. In reaching this decision, we have identified the following public interest arguments in favour of disclosure:

- The general interest in transparency which can further understanding of how government policy is formulated
- Disclosure may serve to widen the base of stakeholder and public engagement which may in turn assist in the development and scrutiny of policy formulation

We also identified the following public interest arguments not in favour of disclosure:

- The public interest in maintaining space for decisions to be taken in respect of international travel policy which remains a very live and fast evolving area
- Prejudicing policy officials' and ministers' ability to seek and draw from scientific advice would be detrimental to decision making which is often finely balanced and affects people directly in significant ways
- The removal of a 'safe space' for policy development in this area could lead to a 'chilling effect' in an area where the Welsh Government depends on open dialogue with other UK administrations in order to ensure that policy positions reached in Wales are workable in practice in the wider UK context which is essential in this area.

In regards to your secondary request, Welsh Government does not pay any money to Corporate Travel Management (CTM) concerning their test booking service for travellers returning to the UK from green and amber list countries. The contract is managed by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on behalf of all four UK nations.

Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
CARDIFF,
CF10 3NQ
Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
CHESHIRE,
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,