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Public Health Wales statement on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

This statement will be updated daily at 2pm

Updated: 2:00pm Thursday 28 May

NOTE: Detailed information on new cases of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Wales is now available on our user-friendly data dashboard on the [Public Health Wales website](#).

Dr Robin Howe, Incident Director for the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak response at Public Health Wales, said:

"On Friday, the First Minister will confirm what, if any, easements to lockdown rules and social distancing will take place in Wales. Welsh Government decisions will continue to be based on scientific evidence and advice.

"Whenever easements are made, a key enabler will be implementing Welsh Government's 'Test, Trace, Protect' strategy. We have made further progress in developing our testing capacity and making sure that we will be ready for contact tracing. Future relaxations of lockdown measures will also be dependent on everyone following advice set out in the 'Test, Trace, Protect' strategy, including self-isolating when required.

"In the meantime, social distancing rules remain in effect. Public Health Wales fully supports Welsh Government's revised stay-at-home regulations. The message has not changed – anyone can get Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), anyone can spread it. Stay home, protect the NHS, and save lives

"Public Health Wales, working with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, is recruiting 500 participants as part of the Oxford Vaccine Group COVID-19 vaccine trial. The aim of this study is to find a safe vaccine that will develop immunity against the virus and thus prevent the disease. Co-ordinated by Health and Care Research Wales, this is a collaboration between Public Health Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and the Centre for Trials Research at Cardiff University

"This is an important study to test the effectiveness of one of the main candidate vaccines for COVID-19 in Wales. If successful, vaccination will provide a route out of this pandemic. We will be recruiting participants for screening and administration of vaccine, and monitoring outcomes and safety.

"Public Health Wales has also been working in partnership with Ortho Clinical Diagnostics on new Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) antibody tests. In South Wales production is now well underway on the tests, which can detect antibodies that can be used to identify an immune response and may be critical in back-to-work strategies.

"Antibody testing is an important part of our strategy to counter the spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and to help us understand who has had the disease. Knowing that the production of the test will be local to us in Wales was of great importance to us as we determined which suppliers to rely on.

"Anyone experiencing Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms can now apply for a home testing kit using the new UK online portal. For further information and a link to the booking website, visit: www.gov.wales/coronavirus or www.llyw.cymru/coronafeirws. This will be supported by a national 119 phone service, through which people can also order a home test.

"New guidance on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms has also recently been issued from the four UK Chief Medical Officers. All individuals should self-isolate if they develop at least one of the following coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough or fever or loss of smell (anosmia) or taste.

"Anosmia is the loss or a change in your normal sense of smell. It can also affect your sense of taste as the two are closely linked. The individual's household should self-isolate for 14 days as per the current guidelines and the individual should stay at home for seven days, or longer if they still have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell or taste.

"Public Health Wales welcomes the extension of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing to all care home residents and staff, and is supporting the implementation of the Welsh Government's 'Test, Trace, Protect' strategy published earlier this month, along with the Critical Workers Testing Policy, which aims to use the current testing capacity in Wales to the full, ensuring we test the right people, at the right time, in the right place, to reduce the spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We continue to work to increase our testing capacity in Wales.

"The Welsh Government announced on Friday 8 May that lockdown arrangements would continue in Wales for a further three weeks: in Wales stay-at-home guidance remains that, wherever you can, you should stay at home.

"Although we appear to have passed the peak of new cases in Wales, Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is still circulating in every part of the country. The single most important action we can all take in fighting the virus is to stay at home, and we thank each and every person across Wales for doing their bit to help slow the spread of the virus.

"We are encouraging everyone to download the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Symptom Study app, which has been supported by Welsh Government. The app allows users to log daily symptoms to help build a clearer picture of how the virus is affecting people. For more information, including how to download the app, visit covid.joinzoe.com.

"Public Health Wales is working to address the negative impact of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the social, mental and physical wellbeing of people in Wales. Our latest campaign, 'How are you doing?' is now live and offering practical advice from phw.nhs.wales/howareyoudoing.

"People no longer need to contact NHS 111 if they think they may have contracted Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Information about the symptoms to look out for is available on the Public Health Wales website, or members of the public can use the NHS Wales [symptom checker](#).

"Anyone with a suspected coronavirus illness should not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. They should only contact NHS 111 if they feel they cannot cope with their symptoms at home, their condition gets worse, or their symptoms do not get better after seven days.

"Only call 999 if you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, do not call 999 just because you are on hold to 111. We appreciate that 111 lines are busy, but you will get through after a wait.

"While emphasising the importance of staying at home, we also want to reinforce the message from NHS Wales that urgent and emergency care services for physical and mental health are still open and accessible.

"For parents, if your child is unwell and you are concerned you should seek help. If you have urgent dental pain you should still call your dentist. If you have a health complaint that is worrying you and won't go away you should call your GP practice. If you or a family member are seriously ill or injured you should dial 999 or attend your nearest Emergency Department."

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