

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

This statement will be updated daily at 5 pm

Updated: 5:00 pm Monday 6 July

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

“Starting today (Monday 6 July), the requirement to stay local has been lifted by the Welsh Government. Also, people from two separate households are now permitted to join together to form one exclusive extended household, and this includes people who are shielding.

“We all have a vital role in preventing the spread of Coronavirus by always sticking to social distancing guidelines – that’s staying two metres away from others and washing hands regularly. You should also avoid car sharing with people outside your household.

“The news from Llangefni and the outbreak associated with the *2 Sisters* meat processing plant has been consistently positive for a number of days. As the employer resumes operations at the plant, the multi-agency Outbreak Control Team has been reassured by the rigour and robust processes the *2 Sisters* management and workforce have put in place to create a safe working environment.

“We are heartened by the positive response from the workforce and the wider communities of Anglesey and Gwynedd. Their support for the testing, contact tracing and isolation phase of our response has helped bring the outbreak rapidly under control.

“Thanks to the combined efforts of local people, the respective councils, health board and wider agencies, the testing phase of the outbreak is now completed, and cases associated and in the wider community have reduced to background levels.

“Additionally the employer, *2 Sisters Food Group*, has confirmed that any untested members of its workforce will not be allowed to return to work at the plant until they have completed a Coronavirus test.

“I am satisfied that the level of infection present in the community as a whole is low. Provided that members of the public continue to follow recommended social distancing, hand hygiene and self-isolation if they experience the symptoms of Coronavirus, then I hope to be able to draw the formal outbreak to a close in the near future.

“The multi-agency team managing the outbreak of Coronavirus associated with Rowan Foods Ltd in Wrexham has recorded 289 cases. There continues to be no evidence that this outbreak is factory-based, and the results we have identified are what we would expect to see when a focused testing takes place.

“Following the Incident Management Team meeting on Friday 3 July, the total number of positive case identified at the *Kepak Merthyr* meat processing plant is 135 since April.

“Focused testing as part of the management of clusters and outbreaks of Coronavirus will inevitably identify new cases, but this does not mean that there has been a significant increase in the level of infection in the community. If we look at other data such as hospital admissions or bio surveillance indicators, there is no evidence of a big surge of infections in the wider community in Merthyr.

“It is too early to draw precise conclusions, but our monitoring does show a historic correlation between levels of infection in the plant and previous background levels of infection in the wider community. There is no evidence to suggest any ongoing transmission in the plant.

“The Incident Management Team’s investigations are continuing. No outbreak has been declared but all necessary investigations and control measures are being undertaken.

“The Food Standards Agency advise that it is very unlikely that you can catch coronavirus from food. Coronavirus is a respiratory illness. It is not known to be transmitted by exposure to food or food packaging.

“Contact tracing continues in Wales as part of the Welsh Government’s *Test, Trace, Protect* strategy. Anyone who has a positive Coronavirus test will be contacted by a team of contact tracers, and asked for details of everyone they have had close contact with while they have had symptoms.

“Please keep a note of your activities so you can easily remember your whereabouts on a given day, along with who you were in contact with.

“If you are asked to self-isolate, you should also comply with this request to prevent further spread of the virus.

“Tracers are trained staff and personal information that you provide will be handled in line with data protection regulations and will not be shared widely.

“Information about the symptoms of Coronavirus is available on the Public Health Wales website, or members of the public can use the NHS Wales [symptom checker](#).

“Anyone experiencing Coronavirus symptoms can apply for a home testing kit by visiting [www.gov.wales/coronavirus](http://www.gov.wales/coronavirus), or by calling the national 119 phone service.

“Anyone with suspected coronavirus 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.”

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