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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 Tuesday 18 August

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

"Public Health Wales welcomes the announcement of £32m investment from Welsh Government in our laboratory service.

"This will allow the service to undergo a major transformation which will significantly increase its COVID-19 testing capacity, speed up testing turnaround times and allow regional labs to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The funding will also see the creation of six Hot Labs at hospitals across Wales, and will create up to 160 new jobs in the sector. More information can be found [here](#).

"The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has paused his advice to shield as the prevalence rate of the coronavirus in our communities has reduced. This means that, as of Sunday 16 August, people no longer need to shield.

"Following confirmation by the Welsh Government that the essential travel restriction on public transport was been lifted on Monday, 17 August, we are reminding people of the need to act responsibility when using public transport.

"This includes planning journeys to avoid busy periods if possible, washing or sanitising hands at the start and end of each trip, and wearing face coverings.

"From 22 August, providing conditions remain stable, up to four households will be able to join together to form a single extended household, and a meal following a wedding, civil partnership or funeral will be allowed for up to 30 people indoors providing social distancing can be maintained.

"We welcome the amendments to regulations making it obligatory for hospitality businesses and other settings to collect contact details of customers from next week. This information is essential for Wales' Test, Trace, Protect strategy for testing the general public and preventing the spread of coronavirus.

"We would remind the general public that as of Saturday 16 August anyone who arrives in Wales from Aruba, France, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands and Turks and Caicos, or who has visited or made a transit stop in any of those countries or territories, will be required to isolate for 14 days. Advice on travelling abroad, including the latest information on quarantine requirements on returning home, can be found on the FCO website.

"Anyone with suspected symptoms of COVID-19 infection - a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss of smell or taste (anosmia) - must self-isolate and seek an urgent test.

"Confirmed cases must isolate for 10 days, with members of their household isolating for 14 days until the risk of passing on further infection has gone. Combined, these simple but effective actions will ensure the virus does not spread.

Updates on current incidents

"There are no significant updates on the previously reported outbreak in Wrexham, or on the incident in Ebbw Vale.

Contact tracing and general information

"Contact tracing continues 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 do so 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 via the NHS 111 Wales symptom checker.

"Anyone experiencing Coronavirus symptoms can apply for a home testing kit by visiting 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.

"Public Health Wales' user-friendly data dashboard takes information from a range of different sources. The total number of positive cases now includes those reported from non-NHS Wales laboratories, which are subject to ongoing de-duplication, refinement and reconciliation. This may result in fluctuation of the total positive cases as this process takes place."

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