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

This statement will be updated daily at 2pm

Updated: Friday 4 September 2020

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

"We are now seeing a steady increase in cases and our investigations show that many of these have been transmitted due to a lack of social distancing.

"This has resulted in the spread of the virus to other groups of people.

"I repeat my direct appeal to everyone to please remember that, even if you feel that you would not be badly affected by COVID-19 if you were to test positive, should you pass it on to older or more vulnerable family members, friends or colleagues it could be extremely serious and even fatal.

"Coronavirus has not gone away. It remains the responsibility of everyone to help prevent the spread of this virus – that is, by self-isolating when asked to do so, staying two metres away from others, and by washing hands regularly.

"I also want to remind the public that if you have recently travelled outside the UK there may be restrictions on your return – these restrictions may be different in Wales than in other parts of the UK, and now include Portugal and some Greek Islands. Advice on travelling abroad, including the latest information on quarantine requirements on returning home, can be found on the Welsh Government and FCO websites.

"Anyone returning to Wales from countries which have been identified as high risk must quarantine in accordance with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office regulations even if they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms or have had a negative test result.

"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.

"Getting a coronavirus test is free and simple to do, either by visiting www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling the free number 119.

"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 has been a significant rise in positive coronavirus cases in Caerphilly in the past week, and our investigations indicate that a lack of social distancing by a small group of people of all age groups, in a range of different locations has resulted in the spread of the virus to other parts of the population.

"It appears that as lockdown restrictions have eased, people have taken advantage of the greater possibilities for activities, but they seem to have forgotten the importance of social distancing – resulting in possible transmission in the wider community.

"It is clear that the virus spreads more easily in indoor settings, and people should take extra care to socially distance in these cases to keep themselves and their friends and families as safe as possible.

"We are aware of a small number of COVID-19 cases in Porth and Penygraig in Rhondda Cynon Taff. Where clusters of cases are identified, Public Health Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board work with local partners to implement our planned response.

"Test Trace Protect teams are working with those affected and contacting those people who have been in contact with a person who has tested positive. A proportion of the positive cases in this incident are from the young adult age group and disappointingly, some have been reluctant to share details of where they have been and who they have been in contact with.

"By not giving the Test Trace Protect teams accurate information, these people are placing their own family members and friends at risk. We are urging them to think about other members of their communities, put simply, they are risking other people's health and other people's lives, especially if they are symptomatic, not staying at home and mixing in the local community.

"As we move through the recovery phase of the Coronavirus pandemic, we expect to see clusters in different settings, as with the incidents described above. We manage any clusters of Coronavirus appropriately, including by providing advice around infection prevention and control, and by supporting contact tracing where required.

"We remind the public and business owners that Coronavirus is still circulating in the community.

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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