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

Updated: Wednesday 16 September 2020

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

"We welcome new measures announced today by the Welsh Government relating to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council following a rapid increase in the number of confirmed cases there. These measures are essential to protect people's health and control the spread of the virus.

 "Under the measures, people will not be allowed to enter or leave the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council area without a reasonable excuse. People will only be able to meet outdoors for the time being. People will not be able to meet members of their extended household indoors or form an extended household. All licensed premises will have to close at 11pm.

"As is the case across Wales, everyone over 11 will be required to wear face coverings in indoor public areas.

"The new measures, which apply to everyone living within the Rhondda Cynon Taf area, will come into force from 6pm on Thursday 17 September.

"Previously announced enhanced public health action in Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil local authority areas continues in addition to the Welsh Government measures announced today.

"These include limits on the use of public transport to essential purposes only, and that local people should not visit care homes, unless it is an end-of-life visit. In such cases full PPE will be required.

"Appointments for the temporary testing centre at Rhondda Cynon Taf Council offices at The Pavilions, Clydach Vale, CF40 2XX can be made in advance via the [online portal](#).

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

"Coronavirus has not gone away. It remains the responsibility of everyone to help prevent the spread of this virus to protect older and vulnerable family members and friends. They should do this by self-isolating when asked to do so, staying two metres away from others, and by washing hands regularly.

"Face coverings are now mandatory for everyone over age 11 in public places, and only six people from an extended household can meet now indoors in areas of Wales where local restrictions do not apply.

"Public Health Wales supports the restrictions which have been put in place in Caerphilly by the Welsh Government and Caerphilly Council. The full list of rules for this area can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#).

"Members of the public in Newport are also being advised of the need to be vigilant for the symptoms of Coronavirus, and of the vital need to stick to social distancing guidelines, as a rise in cases there causes concern.

Our role in testing and sampling

"Public Health Wales does not run any drive-through or walk-in sampling centres. These services are delivered either by local health boards, or by the UK Department of Health and Social Services.

"Public Health Wales does have a role in processing tests and delivering test results, but the majority of tests for Welsh residents are processed by the Lighthouse Labs run by the UK Department of Health."

International Travel

"Advice on travelling abroad, including the latest information on quarantine requirements on returning home, can be found on the [Welsh Government](#) and [FCO website](#)s.

"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.

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 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.

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