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

This statement will be updated daily at 2pm

Updated: Saturday 19 September 2020

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

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

"We are also seeing an increase in the number of people who are seriously ill and have been admitted to hospital with COVID-19.

"Yesterday we issued a statement on rising concerns for communities of Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. Read the statement in full here.

"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.

"Public Health Wales supports the restrictions which have been put in place in Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf by the Welsh Government and local authorities. The full list of rules for these areas can be found on the Welsh Government website, by clicking here for Caerphilly and here for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

"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.

"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.

Symptoms

 "If you or a member of your household develop symptoms of cough, fever or change in sense of taste or smell, you must book a test for Coronavirus promptly to help control the spread of infection.

"You and your household must self-isolate while waiting for the result of your test. If you test positive for Covid-19 should continue to self–isolate for 10 days. Other household members, including those who do not have any symptoms, must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.

"We urge you to only get a test if you have one of these symptoms, unless otherwise professionally advised – for example those regularly tested by their employer)."

Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus is available on Gov.wales

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 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. Visit www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or call 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.

Welsh translation to follow.