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

This statement will be updated daily at 2pm

Statement: Thursday 12 November 2020

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

"Public Health Wales strongly advises the public to take personal responsibility for their actions and to ensure that we are all doing as much as possible to limit the transmission of Coronavirus.

"As we approach the first weekend since the fire-break restrictions have been lifted, we would remind everyone that Coronavirus is still active in our communities, and therefore this does not mean a return to normality.

"We ask the public to observe the new regulations and to limit their contact with other people as much as possible so that we all work together to bring the numbers of positive cases down.

"This means staying out of other people's homes, limiting the times and the numbers of people that you meet, maintaining social distancing and hand hygiene, working from home if you can, and self-isolating if you show symptoms of coronavirus or are asked to do so by contact tracers.

"It is extremely important that we only make essential journeys, maintain strict social distancing with those we don't live with, and reduce the number of people that we meet. All of these actions will help to break the chains of transmission, reduce the spread of the virus, and keep people safe.

"We understand that people will want to carry on with their Christmas shopping now the fire-break has ended and so we would suggest to try to visit shops during off-peak times, to always maintain social distancing and to wear a face covering if you can. Options such as 'click and collect' or online purchasing may also be something to consider.

"This Saturday is Diwali, a festival which is celebrated by large numbers of people from India and of Indian heritage. We would ask those who are celebrating to do so safely, within your own household, and remember the regulations if you go out. If you choose to use fireworks, please take care and follow the fireworks code to avoid injury. We wish everyone celebrating a happy Diwali.

"Urgent action has been taken following reports from health authorities in Denmark that widespread outbreaks of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been found in mink farms, with subsequent spread of a mink-variant virus to the local community.

"Denmark was removed from the UK Coronavirus travel corridor list on Friday 6 November. Any travellers returning to the UK will now be required to self-isolate for 14 days according to the national guidance and legislation <https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control/self-isolating-when-you-arrive>.

"This decision has been taken as a precautionary measure and will prevent risk to Wales and the UK from this new strain. Public Health Wales will be in touch with Welsh residents who have been in Denmark in the past 14 days to explain that they and their households are required to self-isolate.

"We would also advise all members of the public with pet mink or ferrets to avoid contact with them while symptomatic with any COVID symptoms.

"We recognise that many people may be finding life more challenging, resulting in difficulties with mental health. There are many agencies which provide help and support, including the C.A.L.L. helpline on 0800 132 737, which will refer callers to the most appropriate organisation according to their needs.

"If you are in severe mental distress or are having suicidal thoughts, please contact Samaritans Cymru free on 116 123.

"More information about the new rules is available at the Welsh Government [website](#).

"It is still important to look after your health, and you can continue to attend appointments and seek help for urgent medical issues.

"Attending a booked NHS flu vaccination appointment and any of Public Health Wales' [screening clinics](#) is a legitimate reason to travel during the firebreak.

"NHS Wales is still here to help you if you need care, and it's important you continue to attend appointments and seek help for urgent medical issues. You can leave your home to access local health services, including your GP surgery, dentist, optometrist or other health service.

"You should phone beforehand and follow any guidance your local surgery, dentist, optometrist or health service has put in place to protect you and staff, including the need to keep 2m away from other patients.

"It's especially important to look after our mental health and wellbeing at this time. You can find sources of advice and guidance on our [website](#) if you need some help or are worried about a loved one.

"If you or a member of your household develop symptoms of the Coronavirus, such as a cough, fever or change in sense of taste or smell, you must self-isolate immediately and book a free Coronavirus test at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling 119.

"Helpful advice and support is available via the NHS COVID-19 app. As well as providing alerts if you have been in contact with someone with Coronavirus, the app will also tell you the current risk level in your area.

"Information about the symptoms of Coronavirus is available on the Public Health Wales website, or via the NHS 111 Wales symptom checker.

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