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

This statement will be updated daily at midday

Statement: Thursday 17 December 2020

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

"The number of Coronavirus cases continues to increase, with the seven-day rolling average passing 500 cases per 100,000 in Wales.

"Rates of infection have increased in 21 of the 22 local authorities over the last seven days, with the seven-day rolling average now exceeding 1,000 cases per 100,000 in one area.

"In light of this situation, the Welsh Government has confirmed that only two households should come together to form an exclusive Christmas bubble during that period.

"We would ask the public to very carefully consider if this is appropriate for them and their households. Particular caution should be applied if there are elderly or vulnerable members of their households who are at greatest risk.

"For those who do plan on forming a Christmas bubble, it is essential that this is planned and agreed with all the households involved. If doing so, we advise the public to now stop mixing with other households.

"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.

"People will be aware that we are reporting today a backlog of around 11,000 cases on our dashboard today following the data delay over the weekend. This delay results from essential maintenance for the wider Welsh NHS led by the NHS Wales Informatics Service. Public Health Wales announced on Friday that the maintenance would have an impact on its reporting.

"It is important to note that this issue has not affected individuals receiving their results and the contact tracing process being commenced.

"Members of the public can be reassured that anyone who tests positive will be contacted by their local authority's Test, Trace, Protect team in the usual way. There have been no errors in the Public Health Wales reporting.

"It is important that everyone continues to follow the advice on keeping Wales safe. Keep contacts with other people to a minimum, keep a two metre distance from others, wash hands regularly, wear a face covering where required, and self-isolating when asked to do so.

"Public Health Wales urges everyone to follow the rules, to avoid transmission of Coronavirus and to protect everyone in our communities, including the most vulnerable.

"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 either by calling 119 or [by clicking here](#).

“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.

Datganiad: Dydd Iau 17 Rhagfyr 2020

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