

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

This statement will be updated daily at midday

Statement: Updated at 12pm on Tuesday 26 January 2021

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

“We are increasingly confident in the data which is showing a consistent downward trend in the numbers of positive cases in Wales.

“However, the number of cases is still extremely high, and this is placing extreme pressure on our NHS Wales hospitals.

“The UK variant of Coronavirus prevalent in many parts of Wales is up to 70 per cent more transmissible, and as reported last week there is evidence which suggests that it may lead to a higher risk of death than the non-variant. It is therefore vital that everyone continues to remain vigilant, by staying at home and sticking to the rules. This way we will avoid adding to the pressure on hospitals and will keep people safe.

“Public Health Wales is working with Public Health England and other UK partners to monitor the impact and spread of the UK variant, and to detect and monitor other virus variants.

“We continue to investigate and respond to the spread of the variant and its impact in Wales. Evidence is still emerging and more work is underway to fully understand how it behaves.

“It is important to remember that all current variants of COVID-19 are still spreading and can cause severe illness and death. Therefore it is important to stay at home, and to reduce opportunities for spread by keeping your distance, washing hands regularly, and covering your face.

“All of Wales remains in lockdown. We ask that the public adopts the same mindset for this lockdown as they did in March 2020. We understand that people are fatigued but because the new, more infectious variant of coronavirus is circulating across Wales it is vital that we all keep to the lockdown restrictions and do not meet other people.

“This means that you must stay at home. If exercising outdoors, please do this alone or with members of your household or support bubble only. Shop online, but if you do need to visit essential retail then do this alone, if possible, to minimise numbers of people in retail spaces, and avoid stopping to chat with people outside your household. If you must leave home keep your distance, wash your hands regularly, and wear a face mask when required according to the regulations.

“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.

“Public Health Wales is working closely with the Welsh Government as they deploy Coronavirus vaccinations through local health boards. Welsh Government is leading on the deployment of the vaccine in Wales.

“We have been alerted to a number of increasingly sophisticated ‘scam’ emails in circulation claiming to be from the NHS which purport to offer appointments for vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines currently can’t be bought privately in the UK. Do not share any of your personal information. Correspondence will only come from your health board, and your vaccination will be free.

“Vaccinating the adult population of Wales, to protect people from severe disease, is a significant task, and the vaccine will take time to reach everyone. The effects of the vaccines may not be seen nationally for some time, and everyone – including those who have been vaccinated - must continue to follow the advice on keeping Wales safe.

“Members of the public should not phone your GP, pharmacy or hospital asking when they will get a vaccine. When someone is in one of the groups eligible for the vaccine, they will be invited to attend a dedicated clinic which will have been set up to ensure patient safety and that of the healthcare professionals.

“UK nationals returning home from travel abroad must provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test result taken up to 3 days before departure.

“Under current UK COVID-19 restrictions, you must stay at home. You must not leave home or travel, including internationally, unless you have a legally permitted reason to do so.

"If you are due to travel out of the UK, please be aware of the changing situation and keep an eye on the FCO website for up to date details.

"If you or a member of your household develop 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](#).

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