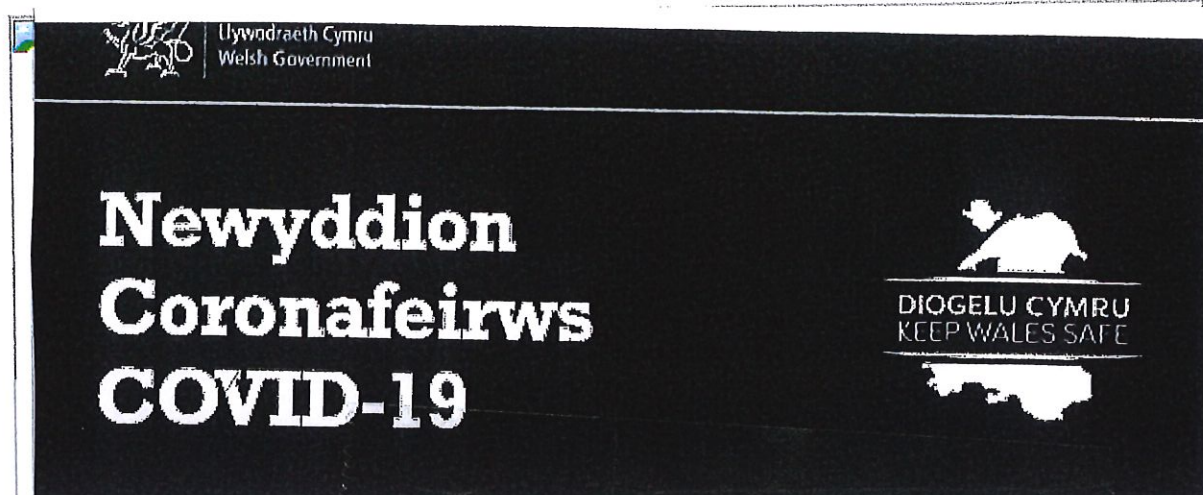


19th December 2020

News

Headlines First Minister's Statement - 19 December

Today, I had a meeting with the Prime Ministers of Scotland and Northern Ireland, and Michael Gove, of the UK Government, to discuss an update on the new strain of the coronavirus.

We now know that this new strain is much more infectious and spreads faster than the original one.

Many of you will have heard the First Minister this afternoon setting out the pattern of transmission in London and the South East of England, which has been linked to this new variation on the coronavirus.

<https://outlook.live.com/mail/0/deeplink?version=20201211022.06&popoutv2=1>

This is particularly consistent with the rapid increase in transfers in Wales and the high incidence rates we have seen in recent weeks.

The latest evidence suggests that this new strain is present across Wales.

Throughout the public health crisis, we had to respond urgently to the rapid changes, which have been so characteristic of the coronavirus.

Today has been one of those days where new information has required an immediate response.

This afternoon, the Cabinet met to discuss this worrying new development in the pandemic and to hear the latest advice from our senior medical and scientific advisers, including the impact on our NHS.

The situation is extremely serious. I cannot overstate this.

We have therefore had to make a difficult decision to introduce the four alert level restrictions earlier in Wales, in line with the action being taken in London and the South East of England.

These new restrictions will come into force from midnight tonight rather than during the Christmas period.

This will mean that non-essential retail, close contact services, gyms and leisure and hospitality centres will close when trading ends today.

Stay-at-home restrictions will also come into force from midnight.

Unfortunately, we must also look again at the arrangements for Christmas – we cannot allow people to come into contact with the risk of this newer, more virulent form of coronavirus.

We will therefore change the current rules, which allow two households to come together to form a Christmas bubble over a five-day period, so that they only apply on Christmas day.

Throughout the warning level four period, one person's household will be able to join one other household.

While we all want to avoid further disruption to businesses and plans for Christmas, our main duty is to protect lives here in Wales.

We know that 2021 will be a different and better year.

Our economy will recover.

Christmas will come again.

But lives that are lost are lost forever.

This new strain of the virus is another unexpected and serious element in this long-term pandemic.

We now have a pandemic within a pandemic, a crisis within a crisis.

It's another challenge we have to overcome. But one we will overcome together.

We will continue to protect ourselves and our loved ones and, together, we will keep Wales safe.

Thank you all very much.

Guidance

Leaving your home and seeing others: alert level 4

Rules on meeting people outside your home at alert level 4.

Legislation, Technical Advice and Statistics

Coronavirus legislation and guidance on the law

The laws and guidance on these laws were passed in Wales in response to a coronavirus pandemic.

Evidence and data used to inform the limitations of the coronavirus

The evidence the Welsh Government is using to decide how to protect everyone from the coronavirus.

Advice on the coronavirus from the Technical Advice Cell

Information to help ministers respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in a way that is in the best interests of the people of Wales.

Statistics and coronavirus-related research (COVID-19)

Latest data and analysis on the impact of coronavirus on Welsh society.

Promotional Material and Toolkits

Coronavirus information sheet: protecting Wales this winter

How you can help stop the spread of the Coronavirus

Information sheet on the coronavirus: alternative languages

How can you help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

Promotional material Testing, Tracking and Safeguarding

Testing, Tracking and Diogleu promotional material including promotional material for the new NHS COVID-19 app

Business Wales Toolkit

Practical resources to help employers keep their employees safe in the workplace.

COVID-19 risk assessment tool for the workforce

This resource helps you consider your personal risk factors for COVID-19 and recommends how you can stay safe.

NHS COVID-19 App

Do you use the NHS COVID-19 app? The app allows you to report symptoms, order a coronavirus test, and register at locations by scanning a QR code. The app does this while protecting your anonymity. If you have already downloaded the app, be sure to use it - the more people who use the app, the greater our chances of reducing the spread of the virus. The app is an important part of our Testing, Tracking, Protection program.

COVID Symptoms Study

Help us fight coronavirus by reporting on your health on a daily basis, even if you are feeling fine.

You can help the NHS in the fight against the coronavirus by completing a daily health survey on [the COVID Symptoms Study app](#). This app is suitable for everyone, not just for the individuals with symptoms.

The app will help us understand the symptoms and spread of COVID-19. By answering some quick questions, you can help us plan our response to coronavirus.

We will not share your answers beyond the NHS and trusted organisations that work directly with the NHS to respond to the coronavirus.

Important changes to blood donation rules

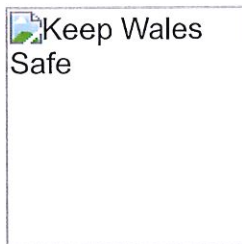
Wales has taken an important decision to lift the restrictions that prevent LESBIAN, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) from giving blood.

Testing, tracking and safeguarding

A campaign is underway to raise public and key worker awareness of the Welsh Government's Testing, Tracking and Safeguarding strategy. The

latest information on the strategy, including guidance for employers, is on the website. (<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-coronavirus>). Video material has produced to use in campaigns and for stakeholders to share on its channelling. You can download the digital material here and **would** appreciate it if you would share on your social channels, in order to share information about the Testing, Tracking and Safeguarding strategy.

Information



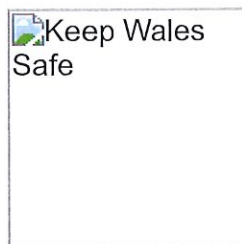
Education and childcare

Guidance on coronavirus for parents, all those working in education and childcare providers



Businesses and employers

Support to help businesses and third sector organisations affected by the coronavirus



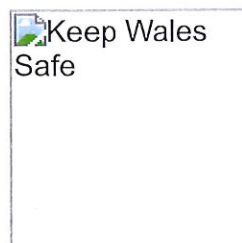
Health advice

Staying at home, self-isolated, supported as an extremely vulnerable person



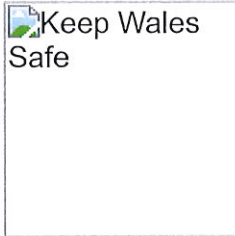
Health and social care professionals

The coronavirus guidance for the NHS and people working in social, community and residential care



Or

Guidance for landlords, park homes (mobile) and rough sleeping services during the coronavirus pandemic



Travel

Advice on the coronavirus for people returning from a foreign country or planning to travel



Volunteering (third sector)

Volunteering during the coronavirus pandemic, support for the third sector



Community services

Planning, fire, domestic abuse and sexual violence



Jobs, skills and financial support

Help with benefits, staying in work and getting new skills

Useful links

[Welsh Government](#)

[Public Health Wales](#)

[Business Wales](#)

[Look at each other](#)

[Volunteering Wales](#)

Hospital discharge service requirements: COVID-19