



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales



August 2020

Foreword from the First Minister and Minister for Health and Social Services

Over the long and difficult months that have passed, the actions we have all taken have slowed the spread of coronavirus in Wales. The number of new cases is now low and, mercifully, very few people are now dying from the disease. That in turn has allowed us gradually and cautiously to lift the legal restrictions and update our public health advice.

But we know from experience elsewhere in the world just how quickly the virus can return, and how swiftly it can spread again. We have seen how we could quickly move from a situation in which the virus is being contained to one in which it is once again in danger of being out of control.

As the number of cases falls, and we have more information about where outbreaks occur, we will be able to take a more targeted approach. So when new coronavirus cases emerge, as they inevitably will, a swift and local response will put us in the best position to avoid returning to a national lockdown.

That is the objective of our Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales. The plan sets out the existing systems designed to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as the new systems we have put in place to respond swiftly to new cases at a local level. Containing outbreaks at source through effective health surveillance, testing, tracing and self-isolation is, most likely, the only way to avoid a return to the strict and intrusive, all Wales, restrictions we have faced together.

Our approach to controlling coronavirus is based on the principles of caution, proportionality and subsidiarity.

Caution, because prevention is better than cure – preventing the spread of coronavirus should be our overriding priority. When considering whether to remove or introduce restrictions, we should take a precautionary approach – where there is uncertainty we should err on the side of caution.

But our actions must also be **proportionate** to what they are seeking to achieve – the Welsh Government’s interventions should not be more restrictive than is needed to contain the virus. We must take care not to take action that harms the people of Wales in other ways. We will endeavour to do the minimum to disrupt people’s lives whilst keeping Wales safe.

And, finally, the principle of **subsidiarity** means that decisions are taken at the most effective level – using local knowledge and expertise to inform local decision making by local elected Leaders and local action.

In Wales we already have a well-established system for bringing together all the relevant local agencies through Incident Management Teams and Outbreak Control Teams. We have built up our “Test, Trace, Protect” capability to support this process. This system will be the cornerstone of our response to local incidents and outbreaks, working within the parameters set out in this plan.



Our plan envisages the need to introduce local or (if required) regional measures or restrictions to protect public health. This means that if restrictions are needed they can be more targeted and shorter in duration, tailored to the situation in each locality or region.

In the pages which follow you will find the six key elements of our Plan.

- It starts with our approach to monitoring new cases across Wales, which provides the information we need to take the right decisions at the right time.
- It has a summary of the different phases of prevention and intervention. This starts with sustained changes in behaviour by maintaining physical distancing and good hygiene. It acknowledges that we must also intervene to manage and control incidents and outbreaks. This could involve increasing testing in particular places, closing specific premises, introducing wider measures across a locality or region, or (if other things prove ineffective) new all-Wales restrictions.

- We set out the criteria for deciding whether to introduce local or regional measures to protect public health. This includes indicative options for intervention in those areas – and considers also how any restrictions will subsequently be relaxed. The exact combination of measures will depend on the nature of any local outbreaks, so the list is illustrative rather than definitive.
- We identify the legal powers which public authorities in Wales have to respond at each level of response, as well as the roles and responsibilities of key actors.
- We describe the governance arrangements and highlight key roles and responsibilities of different actors in delivering this plan.
- And finally, we set out the approach we intend to take to explain what we do. A great deal has been learned during the crisis about the need for effective communication across Wales and in specific places where issues emerge. Our communications will be tailored for different groups and communities.

Coronavirus has not gone away. It remains a virus full of unpleasant surprises, and we must be increasingly vigilant as we move into autumn and winter.

No plan can anticipate every eventuality, but the approach we set out provides us with the best chance of keeping the virus suppressed in Wales. But this depends not only on the Welsh Government and other public authorities, but also on every one of you, the people of Wales. By acting together we can help to make this work.

Thank you all for everything you have done already and please remember that in the challenging days which are still to come, social solidarity remains our most effective method of keeping each other safe, and keeping Wales safe.

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Introduction

The Welsh Government's approach to easing lockdown measures was set out in *Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic: a framework for recovery (April 2020)*. This described how decisions would be taken to weigh up the risks and benefits of moving out of national lockdown carefully, with the aim of avoiding a second significant wave of infection. This framework is based on three pillars:

1. The measures and evidence to judge the current infection level and transmission rates for coronavirus in Wales.
2. The principles to examine proposed measures to ease restrictions, grounded in both scientific evidence as it develops and wider social and economic impacts.
3. Enhancing our public health surveillance and response system to enable us to closely track the virus, building on a strong local presence, through:
 - **improved monitoring**
 - **effective case identification and contact tracing**
 - **learning from international experience**
 - **engaging with the public**

These pillars continue to underpin our action as we work to prevent further infections and contain transmission of the virus. Our objective is to avoid the need for far-reaching restrictions on our society and economy. By moving to an approach based on prevention and targeted intervention, our response will aim to protect specific people, places and localities. In this way we aim to prevent the need for another national 'lockdown'.

This tailored response will require detailed information about incidences of the virus, evidence of their extent and how they have arisen. The evidence we use to track transmission across Wales continues to evolve, as does our understanding of the virus. The crucial role of testing and monitoring to underpin surveillance is clear.

We have learned a great deal from our experience of implementing the national lockdown, including better understanding the impact of different restrictions on containing the virus. This will help us target our response.

We have an effective and well-established public health infrastructure across Wales, built on local knowledge and expertise. Local public health experts come together with local authorities and a range of other partners. This ensures a multi-disciplinary response to prevent transmission, investigate new cases as they arise, and prevent clusters of cases from escalating to wider community transmission. These systems have proven their effectiveness repeatedly over recent weeks and months, in quickly containing clusters, incidents and outbreaks across Wales; avoiding the need to re-impose sweeping restrictions.

A critical part of the plan is our **Test, Trace, Protect** strategy. We have increased our testing capacity and have effective local and regional teams, drawing on local knowledge to effectively trace contacts and prevent wider community infection.

Engagement with the public is a key responsibility at all levels and a summary of expected communications approaches is set out.



Planning Context

Across Wales there are plans in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus, and where this has not been possible, to respond accordingly. These plans are developed and delivered on a cross-agency and multi-disciplinary basis.

Local COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plans

Prepared by:

Health boards, local authorities and partner agencies

Purpose:

Prevention, early response and
containment of clusters and incidents



Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan for Wales

Prepared by:

Public Health Wales and Welsh Government

Purpose:

Process for responding to outbreaks



Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales

Prepared by:

Welsh Government

Purpose:

Oversight and coordination, response to
serious and major incidents

Local COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plans

Each of the seven health boards are working closely with local authorities and other partners to put in place and deliver local COVID-19 prevention and response plans for their areas. They describe how health boards, local authorities and other partners, such as the Test Trace Protect regional teams, businesses and other organisations in the area will work together. The plans set out the measures taken locally to prevent the spread of the virus, drawing on evidence of areas of high transmission risk. They describe how any rise in local cases and clusters will be identified and what the local response will be.

Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan for Wales

The Communicable Disease Outbreak Control Plan ('The Wales Outbreak Plan') is reviewed every year. This sets out in detail the arrangements for managing all communicable disease outbreaks with public health implications across Wales. It describes how an outbreak will be managed, and the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations that make up the Outbreak Control Team (OCT) and the role of the OCT.

The primary objective in the management of an outbreak is to protect public health by identifying the source and/or main determinants of the outbreak and implementing necessary measures to prevent further spread or recurrence of the infection. The protection of public health takes priority over all other considerations and this is understood by all members of the OCT. The secondary objective is to improve surveillance, refine outbreak management, add to the evidence collection, and learn lessons to improve communicable disease control for the future.

Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales

This plan provides a summary of the overall approach to preventing and containing the spread of coronavirus in Wales. It sets out how and when the Welsh Ministers might intervene to introduce local or regional measures to protect public health, or put in place national measures, if required.

Surveillance approach

Surveillance underpins the entire prevention and response approach at all levels. This ensures decisions at local and national level are based on the latest available evidence.

Surveillance tells us what the current state of the virus is in Wales from a local, regional and national perspective. It helps us understand how many people may be infected and whether the virus is being spread to others. It provides us with early warnings of where we may need to take action.

Surveillance is not just about the indicators we monitor and analyse, though they are a key part of our evidence. Information from indicators needs to be combined with the latest intelligence about the virus. It needs to be combined with local knowledge and expertise on what is happening on the ground to ensure the response is tailored and proportionate.

The COVID-19 Intelligence Cell

Our surveillance approach is brought together under the COVID-19 Intelligence Cell, which includes membership from across the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, and other public health and local authority partners. The COVID-19 Intelligence Cell provides a single authoritative source of situational awareness of transmission and provides a comprehensive overview of the incidence of COVID-19 across Wales. It draws on national and local intelligence from, amongst others:

- The Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Public Health Wales
- Data and intelligence from public health professionals about the local or regional context, including Consultants for Communicable Disease Control, Directors of Public Protection and Directors of Public Health
- Data from our TTP systems, including on **testing** and **contact tracing**
- Data and intelligence from **Public Health Wales**
- Information from Incident Management Teams and Outbreak Control Teams
- Expertise from Virology in Public Health Wales as required
- The Welsh Government's **Technical Advisory Cell**
- Cross UK data and intelligence from the Joint Biosecurity Centre

Where sustained or unexplained local increases in cases are observed the Intelligence Cell offers a forum to invite Directors of Public Protection to provide a better understanding of local transmission and the effectiveness of any practical measures applied. Partnering with local authority colleagues at an early stage assures a better informed decision making process to minimise onward transmission within the community. In a similar way where incidents and outbreaks are declared, Directors of Public Protection are core members of the local Incident Management Teams and Outbreak Control Teams.

Headline indicators

In monitoring the progress of the virus since lockdown in March the key indicators have been the rate of infection, or R_t , the number of deaths and NHS capacity indicators. These are still important and continue to be monitored, but they come with delays of around two to three weeks.

To tell us about the current state of the virus across Wales, particularly in local and regional areas, we consider a wider range of indicators and evidence, including:

- New confirmed cases and other disease indicators at a local level, where possible separating hospital and community onset
- Seven-day rolling average of confirmed cases per 100,000 population and rate of change
- Seven-day rolling average for the percentage of positive tests and testing rate per 100,000 population
- Numbers and locations of incidents (clusters with the potential for onward transmission) and trends in areas, locations or settings
- The number and proportion of new cases which are not part of an identified cluster or outbreak
- Consideration will continue to be given to hospital admissions, Intensive Care Unit admissions, deaths and the R_t value

These indicators will be contextualised with local intelligence and insight as part of any decision-making process.

Test, Trace, Protect (TTP)

Our approach to testing and tracing is set out in our **Test, Trace, Protect** strategy.

Testing is a critical part of being able to identify new COVID-19 cases quickly. It is vital for surveillance, so that we understand the spread of the disease and can identify clusters and hot spots. Testing helps identify cases to enable contact tracing and self-isolation to contain the spread of the disease. It allows us to diagnose COVID-19 to help with treatment and care. It is used to help us understand the spread of the disease, and it enables people to return to their daily lives, work and education safely. Our **testing strategy** describes how testing supports our surveillance and response to clusters and outbreaks.

Local contact tracing is a tried and tested method of controlling the spread of infectious diseases. Reducing the onward transmission of the virus requires identifying who is infected, and in turn requires those individuals and their close contacts to self-isolate to break the chain of transmission.

Informing decision-making

The COVID-19 Intelligence Cell combines evidence and data to support all stages of the Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales. This informs our collective responses to prevent the virus from spreading, to controlling local outbreaks, to protecting entire local areas, regions or the whole of Wales.

The responses to the different stages are set out below. There are well-established approaches to controlling incidents and outbreaks. These decisions are informed by local testing, investigations and intelligence.

The decision for more widespread intervention, such as the introduction of local or regional measures to protect public health, will combine analysis of indicators with context-specific intelligence. This includes local and regional intelligence and insights, from **Test, Trace, Protect**, to Outbreak Control Teams, to lessons learned from relevant current or historical incidents. An understanding of the characteristics of the population affected and the population at risk in the area is essential context before action is taken. Sharing information with local government and other key actors on a regular and timely basis, and taking advantage of their local intelligence is therefore critical.

Escalation Approach

Our approach to containing coronavirus is based on the principles of **caution**, **proportionality** and **subsidiarity**. This means that any preventative actions and intervention must be proportionate to the outcome they are seeking to achieve. That action may be precautionary or reactive. Decisions will be taken at the most appropriate level relative to the scale of the action required, so that they can respond to issues as and when they arise. Ideally, this will be before issues arise, through effective preventative actions.

The hierarchy of escalation can be set out as:



Prevention



The most effective way to control the spread of coronavirus is to prevent it from spreading in the first place. This is the responsibility of all of us, from individuals, to business owners, to decisions makers and elected representatives.

Until there is an effective vaccine that is available and rolled out to all parts of the population, we must all continue to play our part to prevent a second wave of infection. The virus has not gone away and there is every chance we will see rises in cases as more of society opens up and we enter the autumn and winter.

Who is responsible?

Leadership for prevention rests with us all. Everyone has an equal responsibility to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Further detail on the multi-agency response at all levels is set out in the Roles and Responsibilities section of this plan.

Relevant powers

The **Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020** include provisions that aim to prevent the spread of coronavirus, including:

- Restrictions on gatherings, both indoors and outdoors
- Requirements for categories of businesses and premises to close
- Requirements to close certain public paths and access land
- Obligation to take all reasonable measures to minimise risk of exposure at workplaces and premises
- Requirement to wear face coverings on public transport
- Powers for enforcement by designated enforcement officers

These restrictions can be amended to reflect increased or decreased levels of risk. We will continue to take an approach that balances the immediate health risk with the longer-term harms from restrictions, such as on mental health and wellbeing. Additional responses might include requiring people work from home, or adjusting existing restrictions.

The ***Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) Regulations 2020*** introduced requirements for persons entering Wales to reduce the risk of imported infections. They require persons arriving in Wales who have been in a non-exempt country outside the Common Travel Area (UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) at any point during the 14 days before arrival to isolate for up to 14 days, subject to a number of exemptions. A country is “non-exempt” if it is not on the list of exempt countries in the Regulations due to the incidence and prevalence of coronavirus in the country.



New Cases and Clusters



The local and regional Test Trace Protect (TTP) teams may identify complex cases or clusters of cases, the response to which is overseen by the Consultant in Communicable Disease Consultant/Consultant in Public Health with the support of local authority Directors of Public Protection and the Health Board Director of Public Health, for the regional teams. Analytical support is provided by Public Health Wales and the Welsh Government's COVID-19 Intelligence Cell. Complex cases and clusters will be reported to the Health Protection Advisory Group and Welsh Ministers, along with the mitigating actions being taken.

This process may identify more complex cases; such as someone in the homeless community, prison population, or with complex medical needs. Clusters might also be identified, with cases from different households but linked to a particular person, location or time period; such as a workplace, event or particular premises.

Complex cases and clusters are referred by TTP from local teams for investigation by appropriate professionals within the regional teams. Regional teams comprise of public health and environmental health professionals from Public Health Wales, local authorities and health boards. Where necessary, an Incident Management Team will be established to investigate and monitor the situation.

If there is concern about clusters in individual premises TTP teams, local Environmental Health Officers and Public Health Wales will support them to take action if someone reports symptoms. Tailored advice is being provided for higher-risk settings, to set out the immediate actions required, and to describe how local and national public health agencies will support them to prevent the spread of the virus. This will help ensure immediate action is taken, before wider community transmission takes place.

Who is responsible?

Leadership for new cases and clusters rests initially with the multi-agency regional team which includes Consultants in Communicable Disease Control or Consultants in Health Protection, local authorities health boards and the Test, Trace, Protect teams. They will identify and manage new cases in the first instance, escalating where necessary to regional and national levels.

Further detail on the multi-agency response at all levels is set out in the Roles and Responsibilities section of this plan.

Relevant powers

Designated public health officers can use powers under the **Coronavirus Act 2020** to use directions to impose legal obligations on individuals who may be infectious:

- to go to a specified place for a test
- to take a test
- to remain at a place for 48 hours for screening and assessment
- to provide contact tracing information
- to remain at a specified place or to self-isolate for up to 14 days

There are additional powers at the local level under **The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984**. Local authorities can make an application to Court for a Part 2A order under **The Health Protection (Part 2A Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2010**. Part 2A Orders can be made to require a person who may be infected or contaminated to be kept in hospital or isolation.

The Health Protection (Local Authority Powers) (Wales) Regulations 2010 confer discretionary powers on local authorities (including powers to impose restrictions and requirements). This includes:

- requiring a child is kept away from school
- that a head teacher provide names and contact details of pupils at that school
- to disinfect or decontaminate things or premises on request from the owner (and to make requests of individuals or groups to do or not to do, specified things for health protection purposes)
- to offer compensation or expenses in relation to a request

The **Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020** include enforcement powers to require improvements to, or to close, premises that are not taking reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure, or prevent the spread, of coronavirus.

Incidents and outbreaks



Where there is a public health concern about onward transmission from a cluster or a complex case, an Incident Management Team (IMT) may be established. This brings together public and environmental health experts and other responsible bodies to coordinate the local response and identify whether onward transmission is taking place. Actions will be taken to prevent future transmission, but if there are concerns that containment measures are not wholly effective an outbreak may be declared. At this point, an Outbreak Control Team is established in line with **The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales ('The Wales Outbreak Plan')**.

In the majority of cases an incident or outbreak will be managed and contained at a local level without the need for further escalation and more general measures or restrictions.

Who is responsible?

Responsibility for managing outbreaks is shared by all the organisations who are members of the Outbreak Control Team (OCT). Specifically, the responsibility for decisions made by the OCT is collectively owned by all organisations represented on the OCT. Individual organisations are then responsible for carrying out the actions assigned to them as agreed at OCT meetings.

Leadership for incidents and outbreaks sits with the Chair of the relevant Incident Management Team or Outbreak Control Team. This will normally be the Consultant in Communication Disease Control / Consultant in Health Protection within Public Health Wales and occasionally the Director of Public Protection within a local authority or the Director of Public Health

Further detail on the multi-agency response at all levels is set out in the Roles and Responsibilities section of this plan.




Relevant Powers

In considering the response to incidents and outbreaks, there are already powers for local authorities (specifically those of Environmental Health Officers) and other enforcement agencies to take local action, such as requiring a premises to close or prohibiting individuals from specified actions. These powers exist at the local level under *the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984* and *The Health Protection (Local Authority Powers) (Wales) Regulations 2010*.

To ensure a rapid response we will continue to review and strengthen the powers available to designated public health officers to intervene more quickly to close, restrict entry, or restrict the location of persons in, individual premises.

The *Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020* already place restrictions on gatherings and the closure of public land, which allows for enforcement to prevent events from taking place. Should these be relaxed at a national level, we will consider whether local powers are required to prevent specific events or prohibit access to or use of outdoor places.

Welsh Ministers have powers under the *Coronavirus Act 2020* to ensure local actions are proportionate and protect public health. This might include directing the closure of certain premises; such action will be taken on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer for Wales and in consultation with local authorities and the Incident Management Team or Outbreak Control Team.




<p>IECHYD Y CYHOEDD Y CORONAFEIRWS</p> <p>Gofyniad i leihau'r risg o ddod i gysylltiad â'r coronafeirws mewn mangre:</p>	<p>PUBLIC HEALTH CORONAVIRUS</p> <p>Requirement to minimise risk of exposure to coronavirus on premises:</p>
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ANGEN GWELLA

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

<p>Diogelu Cymru gyda'n gilydd</p>	<p>Together we'll keep Wales safe</p>
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<p>IECHYD Y CYHOEDD Y CORONAFEIRWS</p> <p>Gofyniad i leihau'r risg o ddod i gysylltiad â'r coronafeirws mewn mangre:</p>	<p>PUBLIC HEALTH CORONAVIRUS</p> <p>Requirement to minimise risk of exposure to coronavirus on premises:</p>
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CAEWDYD Y FANGRE HON

PREMISES CLOSED

<p>Diogelu Cymru gyda'n gilydd</p>	<p>Together we'll keep Wales safe</p>
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Local or regional measures



If incident and outbreak control measures are not thought to be sufficient, local or regional measures to protect public health can be introduced by Welsh Ministers, to provide tailored public health advice and / or regulations that apply to a specific geographic area. In the majority of cases, this is not expected to lead to a ‘lockdown’ in which a mass shutdown of society and the economy in the area is imposed. Local or regional measures will be implemented in response to specific local circumstances of that place and the progressive transmission of the virus within it. This could take the form of advice on travelling and seeing others, or regulations requiring businesses to close. Illustrative examples and mechanisms are set out below.

Advice for the introduction of local or regional measures to protect public health is expected to come from the Health Protection Advisory Group (HPAG), chaired by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales. HPAG monitors the status of the virus and response actions taken across Wales, supported by the COVID-19 Intelligence Cell (see Surveillance section). It reviews advice, evidence and information to make recommendations for escalation to Ministers, who will make any decisions about the need for national intervention. Surveillance indicators are combined with local and regional intelligence on the ground to tailor the response at the local and regional levels. Any decisions will be made in consultation with local leaders to ensure a coordinated response.

Criteria for introducing or relaxing local or regional measures

Local or regional measures to protect public health may be introduced if rates of community transmission in that area are increasing and cannot otherwise be controlled. This may be because an outbreak associated with a particular setting has led to wider community transmission or there are a series of outbreaks that require a more substantive response. Any decisions will first and foremost prioritise the right to life, identifying those measures that can have the greatest impact whilst minimising other harms. This includes minimising the differential impact on children, vulnerable people and those with protected characteristics.

The headline indicators monitored as part of our surveillance approach will provide some data on the potential need for response to introduce new local or regional measures:

- A significant and sustained rise in new cases and other disease indicators at a local or regional level
- A significant increase in the seven-day rolling average of confirmed cases per 100,000 population and sustained increase in the rate of change which is not under control.
- A high and rising percentage of positive tests and testing rate per 100,000 population, in particular evidence of wider community transmission.
- A rise in the numbers and locations of incidents (clusters with the potential for onward transmission) that cannot be linked to trends in known areas, locations or settings under control measures.
- A rise in the number and proportion of new cases which are not part of an identified cluster or outbreak.

Any decisions will not be made based on these or other indicators alone.

There is no mechanistic link between these indicators and the decision to introduce local or regional measures or restrictions. All decisions will be informed by the specific local context and situation on the ground, including advice from local and national health professionals. The HPAG will draw on the full suite of quantitative and qualitative evidence available and synthesised via the COVID-19 Intelligence Cell.

These same indicators and wider intelligence will also inform our approach to relaxing any local or regional measures or restrictions we have had to introduce to keep Wales safe. A sustained fall in headline indicators will offer reassurance measures have worked, validated by local intelligence.

Options for intervention in local or regional areas to protect public health

There are a range of considerations that could shape how local or regional measures are designed to achieve public health objectives, whilst limiting the impact on our lives, society and economy. We will continue to consider and minimise the differential impacts on different people. This includes impacts on people with protected characteristics, children's rights, equality and human rights. This may involve including exceptions for some groups, recognising where effective mitigations have been put in place or there is evidence of differential risk for different groups of people. Any measures will need to be tailored to the specific circumstances at the time, as well as the geographical coverage required.



Interventions could include a mix of public health advice, regulations, increased testing, or any other measures. Examples of time-limited interventions for a particular area might include:

- Closing businesses and venues within the area (such as towns or counties). This might include pubs and restaurants, community centres, places of worship, education settings, or any other place where transmission is occurring
- Provide guidance or impose restrictions on movement of people. This could include requirements to 'stay at home', to stay within a local area, to prevent people staying away from home overnight, or restrictions on entering or leaving the area
- Impose restrictions on gatherings or events by limiting how many people can meet and in what settings. This could include limits on number of people that can meet indoors or outdoors, or requiring places like tourist sites to close where people might congregate
- Restrict transport systems by limiting when individuals may use transport or enter or leave an area, closing transport hubs entirely, or introducing restrictions on transport services
- Advising or mandating the use of face coverings in a wider range of public places
- Any other restrictions or requirements that could prevent further community transmission

This list is illustrative and is not exhaustive. The specific measures that could be introduced will vary depending on local circumstances. Our aim will be to introduce the minimum measures and restrictions necessary to protect public health. This will minimise the harms we know can be caused by widespread restrictions on people's lives, the economy, and society.

Relaxing measures and restrictions in local or regional areas

We will ensure that any regulations introduced at a local, regional or national level to impose restrictions are only in place for as long as they are necessary and are proportionate. Where the desired result can be achieved by issuing advice and guidance, our preference would be to utilise that more collaborative approach before imposing legal restrictions along with the sanctions that go with them. Our approach to adjusting measures and restrictions will consider the impacts of those restrictions on different groups, including children, people with protected characteristics, vulnerable people, and others.

A more targeted approach should mean there are fewer restrictions to unwind. We also recognise that many mitigations are already in place and we are in a different situation to that following the national lockdown in March. Many businesses, for example, have made adaptations to minimise the risk of the spread of coronavirus. We will aim to target any response at those settings where there is evidence the virus is spreading, or on behaviours that are causing that spread.

The pace at which restrictions can be lifted will depend on the specific circumstances applying to each area and the prevalence of the virus in that area. We expect to review any local or regional regulations at least every two weeks. The exact timescale will depend on the state of the virus and the scale of the interventions. We know the virus takes time to incubate before symptoms emerge. Two weeks should provide enough time to determine if the public health advice or restrictions are having the desired effect.

In easing any restrictions we will continue to apply the principles we have set out in **Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic: a framework for recovery**. These place first and foremost the extent to which easing the restriction will have an effect on public health and the transmission of the virus. The impact of maintaining restrictions will also consider the balance with wider harms on wellbeing, equality, the economy and society as a whole.

Who is responsible?

Leadership for the wider local or regional measures described above rests with Welsh Ministers, working in concert with local elected Leaders to coordinate local and regional responses.

Further detail on the multi-agency response at all levels is set out in the Roles and Responsibilities section of this plan.

Relevant Powers

The Welsh Ministers have a wide range of powers that provide for a broad menu of options for interventions that can be used both for preventative and direct intervention purposes.

The Welsh Ministers have powers under the **Coronavirus Act 2020** to:

- Close education institutions or childcare providers (one or more named institutions, all institutions in Wales or any part of Wales)
- Prohibit, or impose restrictions in relation to, the holding of events or gatherings
- Impose prohibitions, requirements or restrictions in relation to the entry into, departure from, or location of persons in premises in Wales

The Welsh Ministers also have broad powers to make regulations under the **Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984**. Regulations can be made to put in place local or regional measures or restrictions and prevent wider community transmission. These restrictions will be tailored to the specific area and the relative rates of transmission and related risk to public health, but might include any of the areas set out above under the section on interventions.

All-Wales measures or restrictions



In the circumstances where local or regional measures are not found to be sufficient to control Coronavirus, we may need to reintroduce all-Wales measures. We have learned a great deal from the imposition of national lockdown in Wales in early March, through to the careful and gradual reopening of our society and economy. We are now in a very different situation to that in March, so our response can be more tailored and targeted.

We are also learning more and more each day about the way the virus is transmitted and the conditions under which it can spread. Our Test, Trace, Protect and surveillance systems are giving us a much clearer picture about where and how new cases are emerging. We are also learning from international experiences from those countries and regions that are seeing new outbreaks and how they are managing them. All of this should enable us to minimise the harms associated with a widespread and broad set of measures, such as those that were necessary in March.

The approach is likely to involve adjustments to the existing regulations to reflect the latest national situation. This might involve tightening some restrictions that have been eased, or introducing new measures such as the recent mandating of face coverings on public transport.

Who is responsible?

Leadership for the national measures rests with Welsh Ministers.

Further detail on the multi-agency response at all levels is set out in the Roles and Responsibilities section of this plan.

Relevant Powers

The existing regulations have been made by the Welsh Ministers under *The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984*. Amendments to *The Public Health (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020* could therefore re-impose restrictions that have been lifted, or add new regulations to respond to new evidence or changing circumstances.

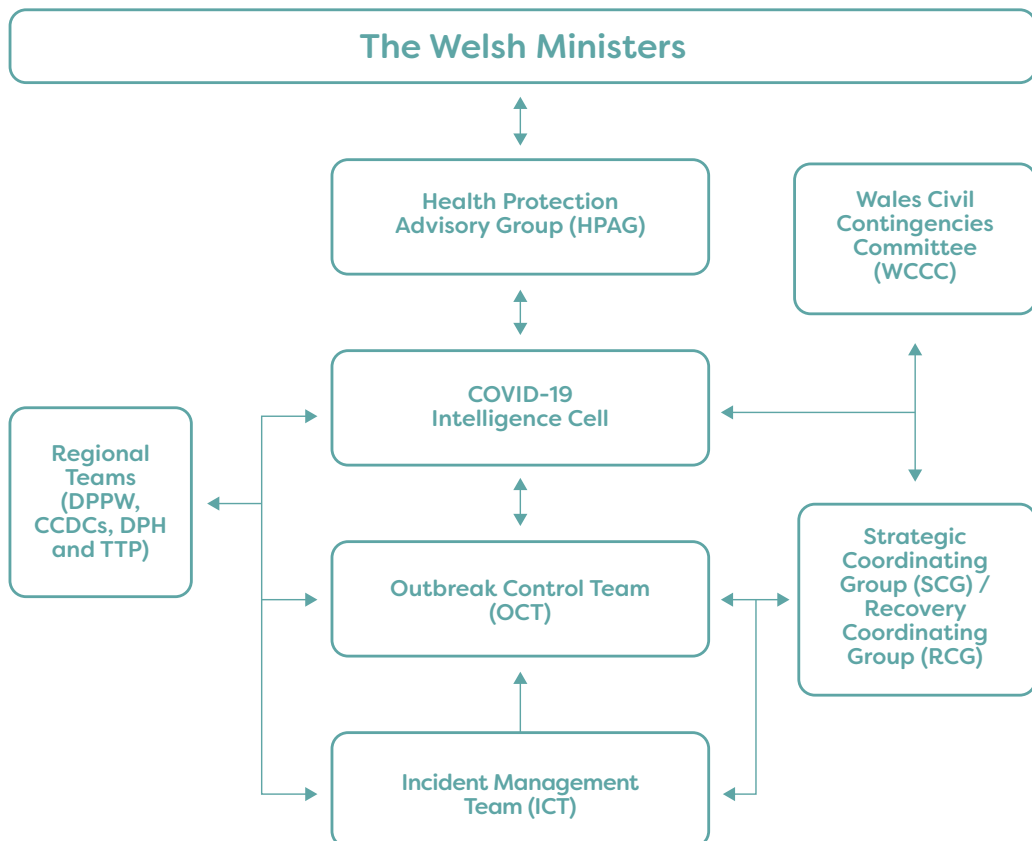
Roles and Responsibilities

The principle of subsidiarity means that decisions should be taken at the most effective level. The approach across Wales to preventing the spread of coronavirus in the first place, aims to avoid the need to escalate into these decision-making structures if possible.

Governance

As noted under the section on Incidents and Outbreaks there is a well-established set of governance and decision-making arrangements that are implemented should an incident or outbreak occur. These are set out in detail in *The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales ('The Wales Outbreak Plan')*. The simplified diagram below sets out the core decision-making structures for responding to incidents and outbreaks as they are escalated. Communication and information sharing happens between all levels.

Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales Governance



The groups described above can be summarised as:

- **Incident Management Team (IMT).** The IMT is a multi-agency team responsible for coordinating the local analysis and response to an incident. They will determine whether the incident is under control or whether an outbreak is declared and an Outbreak Control Team established
- **Outbreak Control Team (OCT).** The OCT is a multi-agency team which shares responsibility for managing outbreaks between all the organisations who are members. The Primary response to identify the source and/or main determinants of the outbreak and implement necessary measures to prevent further spread or recurrence of the infection. Responses may include increased testing, enhanced enforcement (in consultation with enforcing bodies), public health messages, closure of premises, or other targeted actions.
- **Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG).** Take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of an emergency and establish the policy and strategic framework within which other actors will operate.
- **Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG).** An RCG will oversee the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency.
- **Regional Teams.** Multi-disciplinary regional response teams will receive referrals or escalation of cases from local teams that require additional support. Each Health Board area will include a Strategic Regional TTP Oversight Group to provide situational awareness on emerging clusters and outbreaks to key partners and the COVID-19 Intelligence Cell.
- **COVID-19 Intelligence Cell.** Oversight and understanding of the transmission dynamics of COVID-19 across Wales, through relevant, timely situational awareness, assessment and insight into cases of COVID-19 in Wales. It will provide a forum for the Regional Teams to discuss local intelligence acquired through contact tracing and highlight any risks identified. Reports directly to the Chief Medical Officer and to the Health Protection Advisory Group.
- **Health Protection Advisory Group (HPAG).** National all-Wales level oversight of the Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales. Will advise and update Ministers on the incidence of COVID-19, the scale and nature of any local outbreaks and their management arrangements, including any arrangements to recognise cross-border risks. This could include recommendations for national intervention at a local, regional or an all-Wales basis.
- **Wales Civil Contingencies Committee (WCCC).** The Wales Civil Contingencies Committee provides a multi-agency response that directly informs recommendations made by the HPAG to Ministers. This ensures that the wider implications of responses are fully considered and various actors are involved in the process and able to respond effectively. This might include, for example, the police who will enforce any restrictions, or local authorities who may need to respond to new demands or restrictions on essential public services.

All of our responsibility

Every single person in Wales must maintain good practices and encourage others to do the same. The risk factors are now well known, as are the most effective ways of protecting ourselves and others. This means that to support prevention efforts and to support the management of new cases and clusters:

- Avoid or limit close contact with others where possible. This can mean working from home where you can, maintain 2m distance from others not in your household or extended household, or avoiding large gatherings or places where social distancing is not possible.
- Maintain good hygiene. Wash your hands for 20 seconds regularly, ideally before and after touching surfaces others will also touch. Soap and water is most effective, but use sanitiser where this is not possible. Sneeze or cough into a tissue and throw it away, and if this is not possible use your elbow.
- Avoid touching surfaces that are touched regularly by others, particularly indoors. Where this is not possible, wash or disinfect your hands before and after touching surfaces.
- If you have any symptoms, you should self-isolate and seek a test immediately. If you have a positive test, you should cooperate with the Test Trace Protect teams to ensure all your close contacts are quickly traced and self-isolate to prevent the chains of transmission. Parents and carers have a critical role in protecting children and vulnerable people.
- Wearing a face covering to protect others as well as yourself when you cannot maintain 2 metres distance from others, such as a busy shop. You must wear a face covering where it is mandatory, such as on public transport.
- Ensure indoor spaces are well ventilated, with good passage of air.
- Avoid travelling to areas where there are high rates of infection. This might be another country or another part of the UK or Wales. Follow quarantine requirements **to self-isolate for 14 days** if returning from a country that does not have an **exemption**.

Businesses and other organisations that manage premises or provide services

These organisation are responsible for minimising the risks to their customers and staff. They must put in place and maintain all reasonable measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus. For those businesses and services that are higher risk, or for which 2 metre distancing is not possible, **guidance** has been prepared with industry, trade unions and health professionals to help put in place additional mitigations.

Businesses and other organisations are responsible for responding when they identify suspected cases in their staff by encouraging them to isolate and get tested. They are responsible for engaging with TTP teams to respond quickly to prevent further transmission. For those businesses where people are in close proximity for prolonged periods, they are responsible for **keeping records of staff, customers, and visitors** to support **contact tracing**.

Businesses and other organisations are responsible for keeping staff and customers safe by following guidance from IMTs or OCTs and their membership as requested (e.g. enhanced testing or voluntary closure).

Local authorities and Environmental Health Officers

Local authorities and Environmental Health Officers are responsible, supported by the police and others, for enforcing the rules, restrictions and requirements put in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The Welsh Government has strengthened their enforcement powers. These will be kept under review to ensure enforcement officers have the right tools to keep Wales safe. This includes powers to require improvement or to close businesses and other organisations that have not put in place reasonable measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Each local authority will have its own governance arrangements set out in their constitution and Leader's schemes of delegation and functional responsibilities. These set out how and by whom decisions are made. This may include key strategic decisions such as the temporary closure of public services in an emergency. Other specific enforcement powers are delegated to officers to use in accordance with each Council's corporate enforcement policies.

Local authorities have a range of powers set out earlier in this document and are represented as part of the multi-agency governance arrangements set out above. Decisions will be made through relevant governance structures to control the spread of coronavirus in local areas. Requests may be made of Welsh Ministers to intervene where wider restrictions or powers may need to be exercised.

Health boards, local authorities and partner agencies

Together they are responsible for putting in place and implementing Local COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plans. Working together they are responsible for proactively targeting activity and mitigating risks in those areas that we are learning from research and international experience are potential high-risk areas. This might include additional testing or enforcement in high contact workplaces or other settings where there is greater risk of the virus spreading – such as where large number of people mix or they are in close proximity.

Local Health Boards (LHBs) and local authorities provide a strategic overview and delivery for local decisions and testing capacity. LHBs and Public Health Wales provide testing facilities to support Test, Trace, Protect and environmental and public health responses to local clusters or preventative action in areas regarded as high risk. Environmental Health Officers investigate transmission within the community and take appropriate action to mitigate any risks. All have a critical role to play in population testing and each LHB should have a Local Testing Plan with partners to help deliver the Testing Strategy and to actively engage and communicate with local populations.

Local and Regional Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) teams are responsible for contact tracing and identification of complex cases and clusters.

Public Health Wales

Public Health Wales (PHW) provides leadership and specialist advice on public health approaches. They are responsible for coordinating contact tracing, advising on sampling and testing, and laboratory analysis of tests. They are responsible for health surveillance and providing expert health protection advice.

Public Health Wales is also responsible for notifying those returning to Wales from overseas on quarantine requirements, escalating to the police where necessary.

Public Health Wales will provide analysis and expert advice to support the local response through IMTs and OCTs – such as expert epidemiological advice and surveillance data and analysis.

Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) will support the response in establishments confirmed to have a cluster of cases or an outbreak of COVID-19 among food handlers or food businesses. Public Health Wales (PHW) will provide the FSA with information on cases of COVID-19 in food establishments. Where appropriate the FSA will be co-opted onto an Incident Management Team or Outbreak Control Team if there is a response approach that might impact on the delivery of official controls.

The Health and Safety Executive

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will support the response in establishments confirmed to have a cluster of cases or an outbreak of COVID-19 where they are the enforcing authority under the Health and Safety at work etc Act 1974. In these circumstances HSE will be co-opted onto an Incident Management Team or Outbreak Control Team. Where appropriate Public Health Wales (PHW) will provide HSE with relevant information on cases of COVID-19.

The Welsh Government

The Welsh Government is responsible for providing an overarching framework for prevention. This includes provision of clear public health messages, including guidance, to the public about risks and mitigations.

Welsh Ministers have introduced regulations, and related enforcement powers, to provide for prevention such as social distancing and the requirement for businesses to put in place reasonable measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The Welsh Government will support local and regional actions for prevention where needed and coordinate and cooperate with the other UK nations on prevention measures.

Support from the Welsh Government includes the dissemination of evidence and learning, analysis and expert advice to support local responses through IMTs and OCTs. The Welsh Government will set priorities and provide resources to support the TTP system. It will coordinate and cooperate with the other UK nations on new cases and clusters.

Welsh Ministers have a role in ensuring action is taken promptly and that is proportionate. Unless a decision is required to introduce broader local or regional measures, decisions for action will be made at the local level via ICTs and OCTs. In exceptional circumstances, Welsh Ministers may intervene in a local area where they are advised an action is either not being taken quickly enough, or its actions taken have been disproportionate or unnecessary to control the spread of the virus. Any action will be taken in close consultation with local authority Leaders and others. The Welsh Government will coordinate and cooperate with the other UK nations on incidents and outbreaks; in particular where there are cross-border implications.

Where necessary and proportionate, Welsh Ministers will make regulations to put in place local or regional measures and restrictions – and, where necessary, national measures. They will also be responsible for removing those restrictions once they are no longer proportionate. The Welsh Government will coordinate and cooperate with the other UK nations on these measures.

Communications approach

Communication is essential at all levels to be clear about the expected behaviours and for ongoing clear and effective messages coordinated across all sectors and between local, regional and national activity. National campaigns highlight preventative measures required and address cross-Wales issues, such as the Keep Wales Safe approach. At all levels different approaches are required to effectively reach different groups, in particular different age groups and diverse communities.

Data and intelligence used to inform decisions are published regularly wherever possible. This includes information from the **Technical Advisory Cell**, data from the **Welsh Government** and data from **Public Health Wales**. Statements and press conferences are made and held by Welsh Ministers to provide regular updates and communicate key messages. Local elected Leaders also provide local messages to their communities.

The **Local COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plans** set out how communications will:

- Achieve consistency of messages across multiple incidents/outbreaks within the region, consistency across regional borders and with national messaging, including alignment to 'Keep Wales Safe' messages
- Avoid creating new campaigns where national frameworks exist, including 'Keep Wales Safe' and 'Test, Trace, Protect'. Regional communications teams will tailor materials as appropriate to their local audiences, however greater impact will be achieved through consistent alignment
- Use a range of local, regional channels to deliver focussed messaging to areas of greatest risk
- Use a range a local, regional channels to deliver targeted communication in the event of incidents
- Evaluate how its communications and engagement with vulnerable groups drive increased knowledge, confidence and compliance in local communities

These plans will be accompanied by communication action plans to be clear which organisation leads on each element.

There are well-established structures for communication in relation to **incidents and outbreaks** at a local and regional level. These are multi-agency, and co-ordinated through the relevant Incident Management Team (IMT) and Outbreak Control Team (OCT) arrangements. These are set out in The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales ('The Wales Outbreak Plan').

Under this plan an OCT will keep the public and media as fully informed as necessary without prejudicing the investigation and without compromising any statutory responsibilities or legal requirements and without releasing the identity of any patient/case. At the first meeting of an OCT, a communications approach should be agreed including arrangements for keeping the media informed. This should include a nominated spokesperson(s) and a process for arranging press conferences and releasing press statements and other public messages. Communications teams across different agencies will work together to ensure reassurance is provided and clear and consistent messages are used. This activity will also be coordinated with the Welsh Government and other organisations as specified by the OCT.

Welsh Government communications teams monitor local responses via liaison with PHW and through the **Warning and Informing Group**, in order to make sure that local and national messages are aligned, and to support and convene where this is required.

Welsh Government communications teams also monitor potential areas where national intervention may be required through HPAG. This enables forward planning and early establishment of closer links with partner agencies in this area. This will be vital in ensuring that there is smooth integration of communications efforts in the event of an escalation where Welsh Ministers' powers were to be used for more restrictive protection measures in specific geographical areas or across the whole of Wales.

In the event that these measures are introduced, Welsh Government communications would integrate within the existing outbreak communications structure, providing pre-planned additional digital content via our channels, including geo-targeting of posts to the relevant areas affected by restrictions. Ministers will also undertake national and local media work to explain the changes and provide reassuring messages, alongside local leadership. Communications around the TTP programme will also be scaled up locally in parallel. Local stakeholder communications will remain the primary responsibility of local agencies such as health boards and local authorities, through existing channels. Local elected Leaders will also speak to and for the locality.