

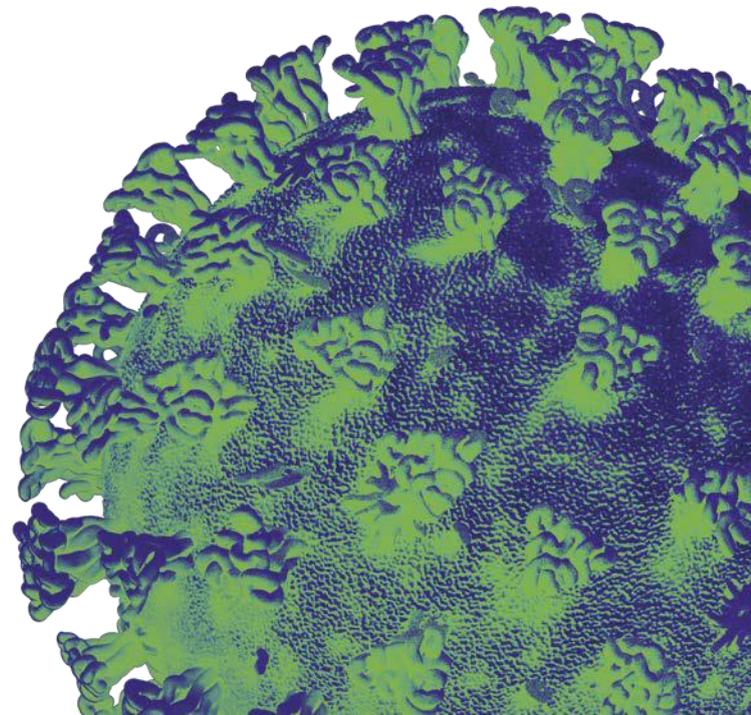
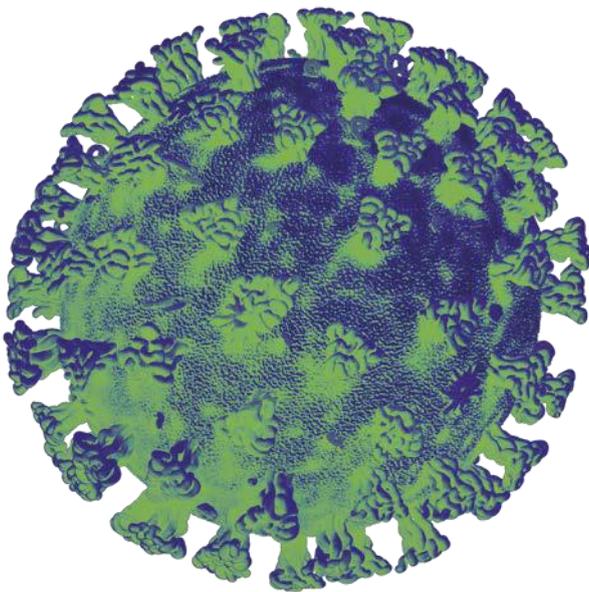
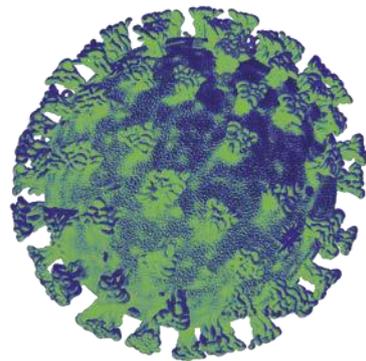


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Technical Advisory Cell

Summary of advice

4th September 2020



Technical Advisory Cell: Summary Brief

4th September 2020

Top-line summary

- Results from the Office for National Statistics infection study show that for the week 19th August to 25th August, an estimated 0.05% of the community population in Wales had COVID-19. This equates to approximately 1 person in every 2,200 or 1,400 people during this time.
- The current growth rate is estimated to be between -0.08 and -0.02. There is significant uncertainty around the actual growth rate; infections could be shrinking by two to eight percent a day.
- Care should be taken when interpreting these figures due to low sample sizes and case numbers.
- Increased connectivity could amplify local transmission in both Higher and Further Education settings. Therefore clear strategies are needed for risk management and support for testing, tracing and isolation. The wider physical and mental health of learners and staff beyond COVID-19 requires consideration. Communication strategies are critical to minimising transmission risks. Full papers on this topic are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sage-meetings-september-2020>
- Cases of reinfection with COVID-19 have been reported. Therefore existing guidance should be followed, including for people who have contracted COVID-19 previously.
- An increasing proportion of positive tests occurring in younger people has been noted, however there is caution against focussing only on one age group.
- Cases have increased in many European countries and whilst a rise on the same scale has not occurred in the UK, there is concern about the importation of infection from people arriving in the UK.
- Papers from SAGE considered by the Technical Advisory Cell and Group are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19#meeting-minutes-and-supporting-papers>.
- Additional papers published by the Technical Advisory Group are available here: <https://gov.wales/advice-coronavirus-technical-advisory-cell#Subjectspecificreports>

Growth Rate

- The current growth rate is estimated to be between -0.08 and -0.02. There is significant uncertainty around the actual growth rate; infections could be shrinking by two to eight percent a day.
- Care should be taken when interpreting the growth rate and reproduction number of Wales. This is because these estimates are based on low case numbers and dominated by clustered outbreaks and are not sufficiently robust to inform policy decisions.

Reproduction number

- The most recent estimate of the Reproduction number R_t for Wales from SAGE is predicted to be between 0.50 and 1. Due to the low number of cases, the estimate of R_t is now shown as a range without a central estimate. The large confidence interval suggests a high degree of uncertainty of the exact value of R_t .
- A consistent R_t value below 1 will lead to a reduction in cases and hospitalisations, however a consistent R_t value above 1 will lead to an increase in cases and hospitalisations. As the number of cases falls, the impact of over-dispersion events may increase where instances of the virus being spread to several people in a short space of time may lead to fluctuations in the number of cases.

Current Estimate of R_t in Wales

- There is evidence of small variations in R_t between the different nations of the UK. There is, however, greater uncertainty in the estimates for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland partly due to the smaller numbers of cases and deaths compared to England.
- Any changes in transmission that may have occurred in the past two to three weeks will not yet be reflected in clinical data, nor therefore in current estimates of R_t .
- There are three settings which are particularly relevant to the current situation: the community, care homes, and hospitals. These are not independent; infection can be spread between hospitals and care homes, from these settings back into the community, and vice versa. These cannot be captured though estimating R_t separately for care homes and hospitals. R_t only considers onward transmission after the virus has been introduced into a particular population.

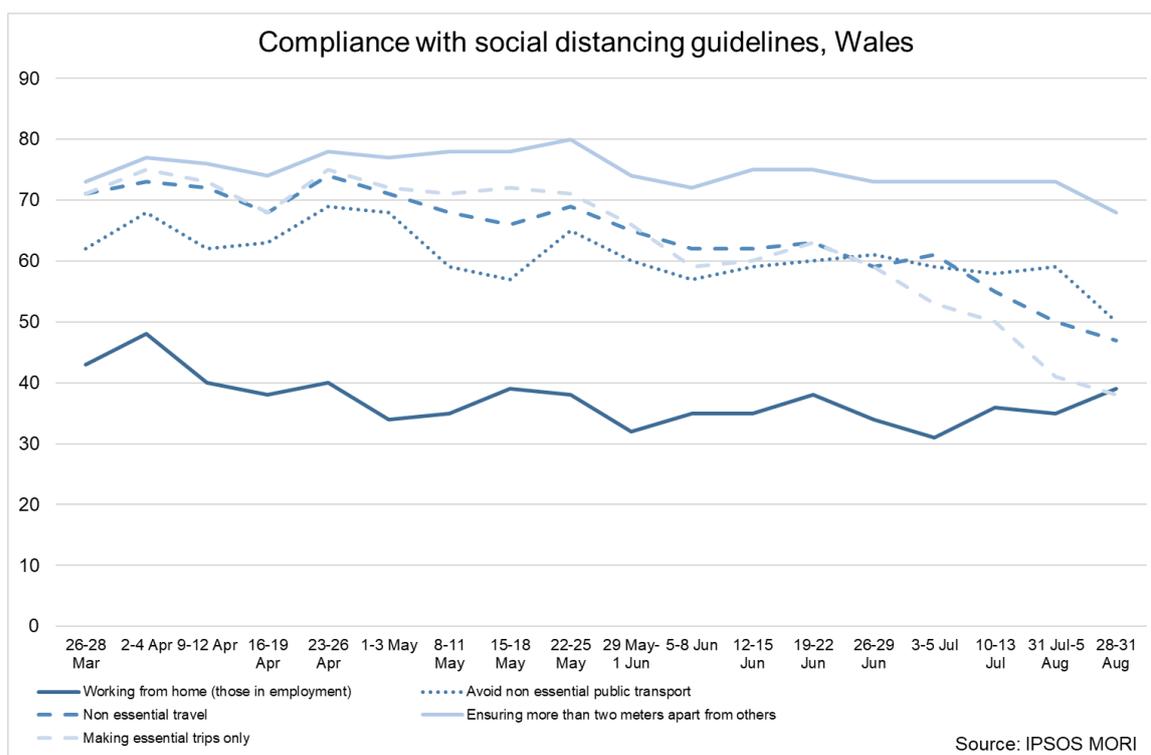
- SPI-M-O recommends that the situation in particular settings is not monitored using R_t , but rather in terms of how the number of cases and deaths in them is changing and, where possible, epidemiological investigation of how the three epidemics interact.

Halving time

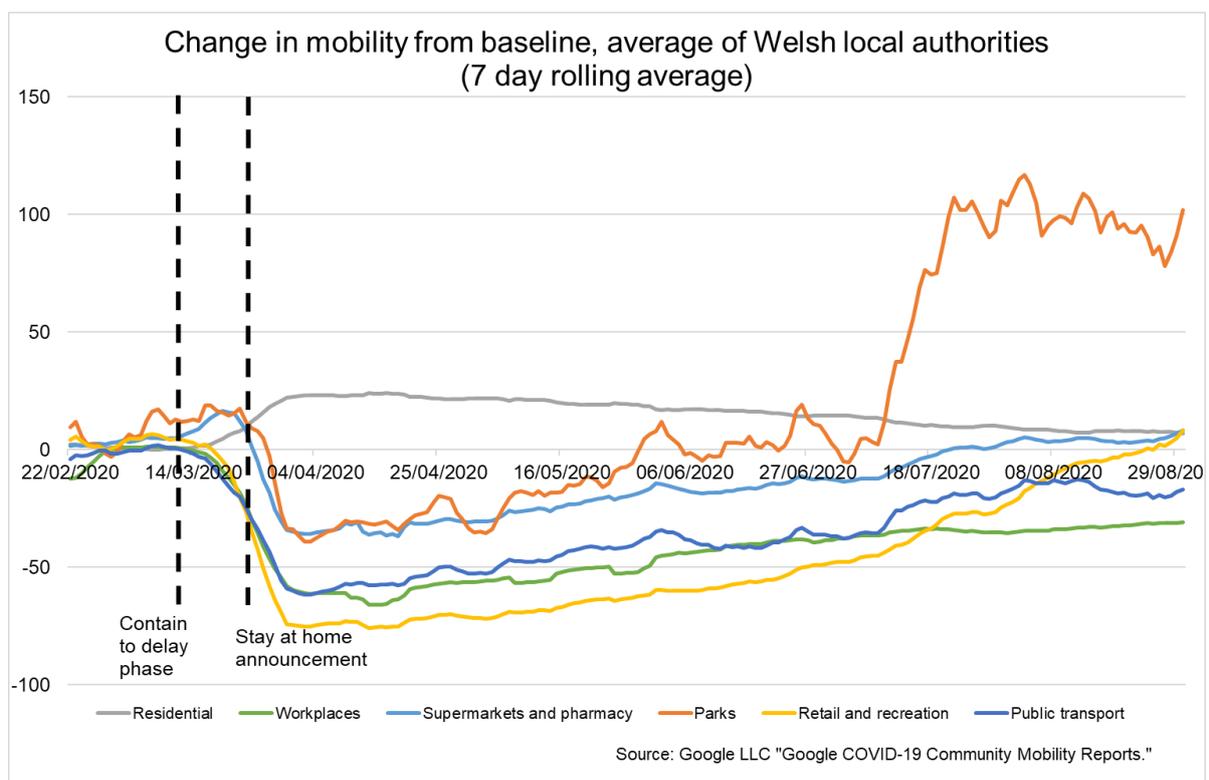
- Reliable estimates of halving times cannot currently be estimated due to low numbers of admissions.

Adherence to current measures and mobility

- The most recent [IPSOS MORI data](#) for Wales shows reductions in those ensuring they are more than 2 meters apart from others. There were further reductions in those making essential trips only and avoiding non-essential public transport. These reductions may have occurred as a result of changes in public transport guidelines in mid-August as well as the most recent period covering the August bank holiday weekend.
- The figure below represents data collected online by IPSOS MORI as part of a multi-country survey on the Global Advisor platform. Each of the waves has included c.600 respondents in Wales. The sample is broadly representative of the adult population aged 16-74. Data is weighted to reflect the age and gender profile of the Welsh population aged 16-74. All samples have a margin of error around them. For a sample of around 500, this is +/- 4.8 percentage points.



- Mobility data in the last week shows increases. Changes in mobility were higher than the UK average.
- In mid-April mobility of [Facebook users](#) in Wales was 50% lower than the baseline, this is now around the baseline and is up from last week. 23% of Facebook users in Wales are staying put, down slightly from the previous week. In early April around 45% were staying put – this was around 18% in early March.
- [Apple data](#) showing requests for driving directions in Wales have increased slightly in the last week (covering the bank holiday weekend). Relative to the baseline the data are higher than the other nations. The [Google mobility data](#) shows continued increases in retail & recreation. Supermarkets & pharmacies, public transport and parks all show increases.
- After lockdown patterns of mobility between England and Wales were broadly similar. Between mid-May and early-June England saw larger increases in mobility than Wales, with Scotland showing a similar pattern to Wales. During July mobility increased more in Wales than in England and that has continued throughout August.
- The figure below shows the change in mobility in Wales using Google mobility data. The figures are based on the average of the local authorities that have data. The baseline is the median value, for the corresponding day of the week, during the 5-week period Jan 3–Feb 6, 2020.



ONS Infection Study

- For the week 19 August to 25 August, an average of 0.05% of the community population had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 0.01% to 0.11%).
- This equates to approximately 1 person in every 2,200 (95% credible interval: 1 in 8,300 to 1 in 900), or 1,400 people during this time (95% credible interval: 400 to 3,500).
- Data suggest the rate has been relatively stable over the past 6 weeks.
- There will be considerable uncertainty in this estimate until the sample size increases over further weeks.

Research

- There are currently 5369 Welsh patients recruited to COVID-19 urgent public health studies, an increase of 48 in last 7 days.

COVID-19 weekly surveillance and epidemiological summary from Public Health Wales

- NHS 111 and NHS direct calls for COVID-related symptoms are low and stable.
- Ambulance calls possibly related to COVID are stable.
- During week 35 the number of lab confirmed COVID-19 episodes increased nationally compared to the previous week but remains low and positivity has increased to just above 1%. Age-group specific incidence is now highest in those younger than 30 years.
- Recent cases have included travellers returning from countries outside the UK and also local transmission in work places and social networks.
- Hospital and ICU admissions are low and stable.
- The main recent foci of recent activity has been in Caerphilly, Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil.

- There continues to be 1 to 10 new incidents reported per week, mainly in residential care homes, but with recent increases in other settings including clusters amongst family and friends and in workplaces.

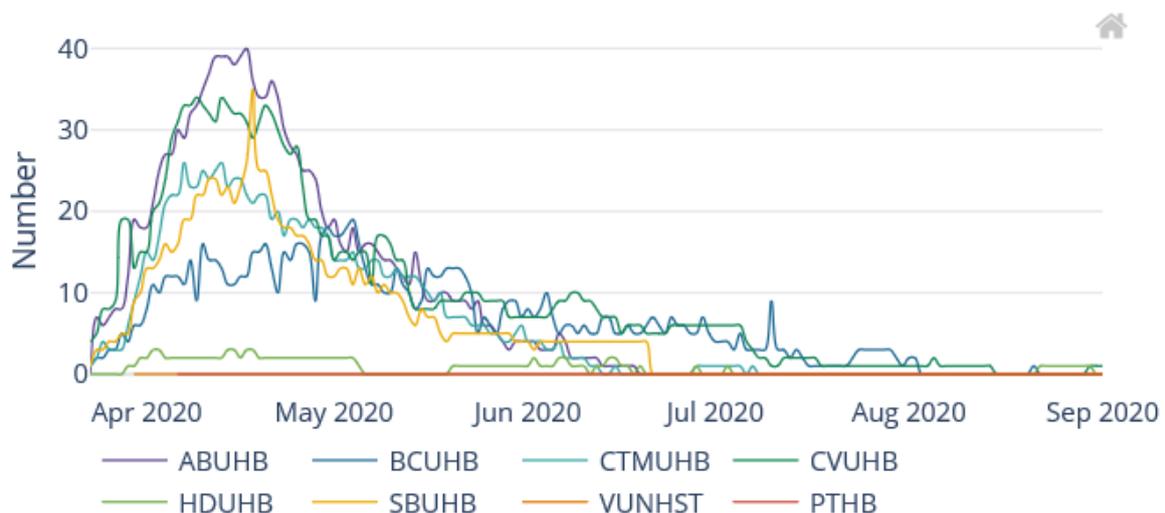
NHS Data Dashboard

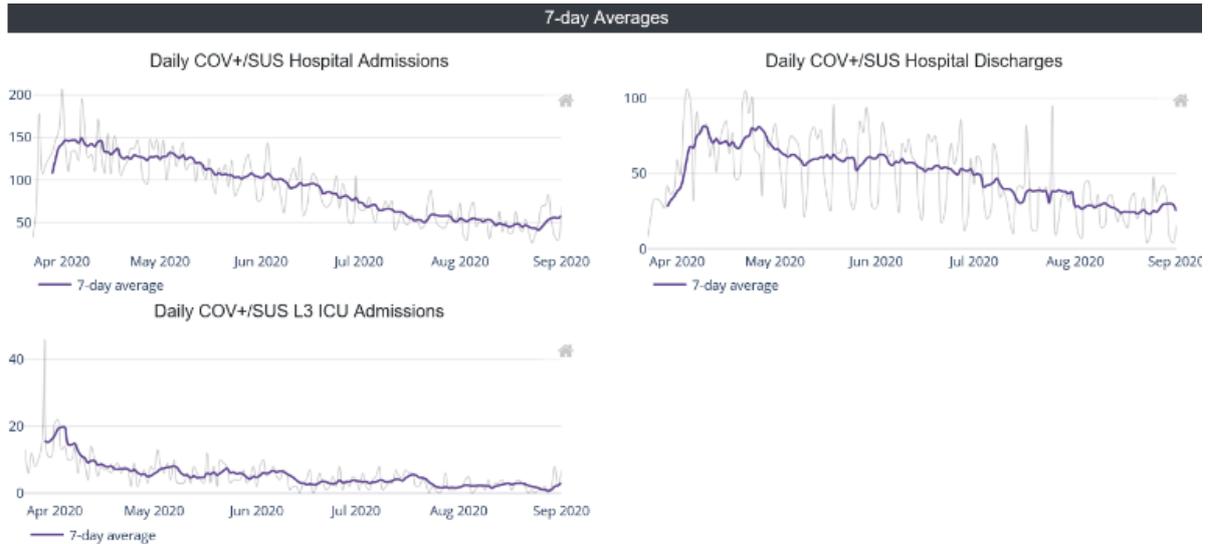
- PHW data updated at 02/09/2020
- Hospital data updated at 03/09/2020

L3 ICU

- Of the total of 129 patients in L3 ICU in Wales (up from 123 in previous report):
 - 1 is a confirmed COVID patient (in CVUHB)
 - 10 are suspected COVID patients (5 in CVUHB, 3 in SBUHB and 2 in ABUHB)
- Of the health boards with L3 ICU units:
 - CTMUHB is at 78% occupancy (all non-COVID patients)
 - CVUHB is at 53% occupancy (with 1 confirmed and 5 suspected COVID patients)
 - SBUHB is at 52% occupancy (with 3 suspected COVID patients)
 - ABUHB is at 50% capacity (with 2 suspected COVID patients)
 - HDUHB and BCUHB are at less than 50% occupancy.

Daily L3 ICU Confirmed COVID19 Patients





Professional Head of Intelligence Assessment (PHIA) probability yardstick

- Where appropriate, TAC advice will express Likelihood or confidence in the advice provided using the PHIA probability yardstick to ensure consistency across the different elements of advice.

