



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein Cyf/ Our ref ATISN 14306

30 September 2020

Dear

ATISN 14306– Face coverings

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 11 September

Your request was worded as follows:

“With regards to the decision to force people in Wales to wear face masks in shops, under the FOIA, please supply the following information:

- 1. The evidence that asymptomatic people are driving transmission of Covid 19 in Wales.*
- 2. The randomised controlled trial evidence that face coverings are effective at controlling the spread of viruses.*
- 3. The risk assessment and risk/benefit analysis.*
- 4. Details of the government provision for disposal of this, presumably deadly contaminated, clinical waste, or if no provision exists, the rationale for it.*
- 5. Copies of all correspondence, minutes, emails and transcripts of all conversations pertinent to this matter in the last 3 months”*

Response

In relation to point 1, the following advice from the Technical Advisory Group sets out what is driving the transmission of the virus at the present time:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-09/advice-summary-11-september-2020.pdf>

In relation to points 2 and 3, the following advice from the Technical Advisory Group sets out the most recent evidence about the effectiveness of face coverings and the risks and benefits:

https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/technical-advisory-group-updated-advice-on-face-coverings_1.pdf

In relation to point 4, Disposable paper face coverings should be thrown away with the 'black bag' waste at home. Reusable face coverings can be washed with the home laundry. There is no specific Welsh Government guidance on this but you might find this advice from the UK Government helpful.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>

In relation to point 5, from my searches, I consider that your request should be refused, as dealing with it would exceed the appropriate limit. The 'appropriate limit' is set out in the Freedom of Information & Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations and, for central government, that's £600 or 24 hours. This means if we estimate it would take over 24 hours to determine whether we hold the information and to thereafter locate, retrieve and extract it then we can refuse the request.

You may wish to refine your request by narrowing its scope by being more specific about the information you wish to obtain. This may reduce the likelihood of exceeding the appropriate limit as set out in Section 12. We would be happy to revise our calculations in this instance.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedomofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,