

Coronavirus timeline: Welsh and UK Government's response

Research Briefing

The table below highlights key developments in Wales and the UK in response to coronavirus (Covid-19).

<p>Three-tiered alert system in England</p> <p><i>12 October 2020</i></p> <p>The UK Prime Minister, <u>Boris Johnson</u>, <u>announces</u> a new, three tiered system of local COVID-19 alert levels in England. From 14 October 2020, <u>Liverpool City Region</u> will be placed on the 'very high' alert level (the highest).</p>
<p>Local restrictions in Bangor</p> <p><i>9 October 2020</i></p> <p>Local coronavirus restrictions are introduced in response to an <u>outbreak in Bangor</u>. 'The targeted local health protection area in Bangor is being created in response to a significant cluster of cases, which has developed in the city - the incident rate stands at around 400 cases per 100,000 people. Cases appear to be closely associated with young people and the student population'.</p>
<p>New Welsh Minister for Mental Health</p> <p><i>8 October 2020</i></p> <p>The <u>First Minister appoints</u> Eluned Morgan as Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Welsh Language, in recognition of the impact the coronavirus pandemic has on people's mental health and wellbeing. Eluned Morgan will work alongside the Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething, who will continue to lead the Welsh Government's coronavirus response.</p>
<p>Walk-through testing near universities</p>



8 October 2020

The Minister for Health and Social Services and Minister for Education confirm that more walk-through Local Testing Sites (LTS) will open this month near universities in Swansea, Cardiff, Bangor and Aberystwyth. (The first LTS opened in September in Pontypridd near the University of South Wales.

Care homes review

7 October 2020

An independent, rapid review of care homes' operational experience between July and September 2020, commissioned by the Welsh Government is published. The report highlights best practice and considerations for health and social care partners when planning for winter. The Welsh Government also publishes a progress update on its care home action plan.

Covid 19 reconstruction plan

6 October 2020

The Counsel General and Minister for European Transition, Jeremy Miles, publishes the report Covid-19 Reconstruction: Challenges and Priorities which sets out the Welsh Government's approach to reconstruction. It highlights priority areas where Welsh Government will focus resources and efforts to maximise the benefits to Wales. Eight key priorities for reconstruction are set out and a £320 million package will be invested in projects and schemes in each of the priority areas over the next 6 months.

Changes for those living alone in areas under local restrictions

2 October 2020

The First Minister announces that "adults living alone, including single parents, in areas under local coronavirus restrictions will be able to form a temporary bubble with another household in their local area" from 3 October. The Welsh Government says this change is "designed to help protect people living alone from the risk of experiencing loneliness and isolation".

Restrictions extended in Caerphilly

2 October 2020

Following a review of the regulations underpinning the coronavirus restrictions the First Minister, Mark Drakeford, says that "we need to see rates come down further before restrictions are relaxed" in Caerphilly. The Welsh Government said it will use the next 7 days "to agree a phased route out of these restrictions" with Caerphilly County Council and other local authorities.

Local restrictions across north Wales

29 September 2020

The Health Minister announces that the measures which are in place in the other twelve local authority areas of Wales will come into force in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Conwy and Wrexham from Thursday 1 October.

Prioritising COVID-19 tests

29 September 2020

Wales' Minister for Health and Social Care, Vaughan Gething, sets out the prioritisation for Covid-19 testing in Wales as the Welsh Government moves into a new phase of its response. The Minister set out six priorities for testing, the first being tests for NHS clinical care (hospital patients) followed by those living and working in care homes. The third priority is to test NHS staff including GPs and pharmacists and then testing to manage outbreaks. Those working in education or childcare settings are the fifth priority group with all symptomatic individuals being sixth.

Restrictions for three more counties

27 September 2020

The First Minister, Mark Drakeford, announces that the same measures which are in place in the other nine local areas of Wales will come into force in Neath Port Talbot, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan from Monday 28 September.

Call to 'protect the NHS'

27 September 2020

The Welsh Government are asking people "to help protect vital services for those in most need by accessing alternative services rather than their Emergency Department when their complaint is neither life-threatening nor serious". The Health Minister said: "we all need to remember that our NHS staff and services are still under huge pressure".

Restrictions for Cardiff, Llanelli and Swansea

25 September 2020

The Health Minister, Vaughan Gething, announces restrictions will come into force in Llanelli from 6pm on Saturday 26 September and in Cardiff and Swansea from 6pm on Sunday 27 September. The following measures will apply to all three areas: no one will be allowed to leave or enter their area

without a reasonable excuse; and people can't meet indoors with anyone they don't live with including their extended household.

Review of the restrictions in Caerphilly

24 September 2020

Following a review of the local coronavirus restrictions in Caerphilly the Health Minister, Vaughan Gething, says that "after discussing the situation with the local authority, we have decided to leave the restrictions in place for at least a further seven days".

NHS COVID-19 app launches

24 September 2020

People aged 16 and over across England and Wales can download the NHS COVID-19 app. The Welsh Government says it "forms a central part of the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect programme identifying contacts of those who have tested positive for coronavirus".

Wales wide measures

22 September 2020

The First Minister, Mark Drakeford, attends a COBR meeting with the Prime Minister, First Ministers of Scotland and Northern Ireland and the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland. Mark Drakeford announces new measures for Wales which will come into effect at the same time as the rest of the UK. These include that from 6pm on Thursday 24 September: hospitality businesses (pubs, cafes, restaurants and casinos) will close at 10pm and will only be able to provide table service; off licenses, such as supermarkets, will stop selling alcohol at 10pm.

Increase in COVID-19 alert level

21 September 2020

The four Chief Medical Officers for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland recommend that the COVID-19 alert level should increase to Level 4. This means that that the virus is in general circulation and transmission is high or rising exponentially.

Further local coronavirus restrictions

21 September 2020

The Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething, announces that restrictions will be introduced in Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and

Newport. From 6pm on 22 September the following restrictions will be in place: people will not be able to leave or enter the local authority area without a reasonable excuse (such as for work or education); people will only be able to meet outdoors and not meet inside with members of their extended household; and licensed premises will have to close at 11pm. These measures will also be extended to Caerphilly borough at the same time.

Briefing from the UK Government's advisors

21 September 2020

The Chief Medical Officer for England, Chris Whitty, and the Chief Scientific Advisor, Patrick Vallance, provided a update on COVID-19. They highlighted that cases in the UK are doubling every 7 days and if this continues without any action there could be around 49,000 new cases per day by mid-October. Chris Whitty said it's a "six month problem that we have to deal with collectively" and that "this is all of our problem".

Testing update

17 September 2020

In a statement, the Health Minister provides an update on Wales' response to the current challenges with coronavirus testing.

Sport and leisure recovery funding

17 September 2020

Wales' Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism announces a £14 million 'sport and leisure recovery fund'. The funding package aims to support the sector with the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic and provide longer-term sustainability. The fund will be delivered by Sport Wales, and will be in addition to the Emergency Sport Relief Fund and the Be Active Fund, also administered by Sport Wales.

Rhondda Cynon Taf restrictions

16 September 2020

The Health Minister announces that coronavirus restrictions will be tightened in Rhondda Cynon Taf following a sharp increase in cases in the area. From 6pm on 17 September: people will not be allowed to enter or leave the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council area without a reasonable excuse; people will only be able to meet outdoors; people will not be able to meet members of their extended household indoors, or form an extended household; all licensed premises must close at 11pm.

Winter protection plan

15 September 2020

The Welsh Government publishes its winter protection plan for health and social care, setting out how services will manage the added challenge of coronavirus during the coming winter period. The Health Minister also made a statement in Plenary about the plan.

Newport is told to 'be vigilant'

14 September 2020

Residents of Newport are advised about the "need to stick to social distancing" as there are a rise in cases. Seven bars are listed which have seen confirmed cases of coronavirus and people are advised to look out for symptoms of COVID-19 if they have visited these premises recently.

New Cardiff coronavirus facility

14 September 2020

Wales' Health Minister announces £33 million funding for a new facility in Cardiff to manage any potential increase in coronavirus cases this winter. "The new facility, providing 400 extra beds, will be built next to the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff following the decommissioning of the Dragon's Heart hospital at the Principality Stadium".

Working from home in Wales

13 September 2020

The Welsh Government states its long-term ambition to see around 30% of Welsh workers working from home or near to home, including after the threat of coronavirus lessens. "The intention is to develop a hybrid workplace model, where staff can work in the office, at home, or in a hub location. The aim is that this will enable 30% or more of workers to work remotely, helping reduce congestion and pollution and improving work-life balance for employees and employers".

The 'rule of six' and compulsory face coverings

11 September 2020

In response to the increase in coronavirus cases across Wales, a tightening of the rules on meeting socially in Wales is announced, along with compulsory face coverings. From 14 September 2020, a maximum of six people can meet indoors at any one time (this does not include children under 11). They must be

from the same exclusive household group/bubble. The rule of six does not apply to outdoor meetings in Wales. Social gatherings of more than six people are also prohibited **in England** from this date (indoors or outdoors). In **Scotland**, a maximum of six people from two households can gather together indoors or outdoors.

Also from 14 September, all Welsh residents over the age of 11 (apart from those who are exempt) will be required to wear face coverings in indoor public spaces, such as shops. This does not extend to pubs and restaurant at the present time.

Actions in Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taff

10 September 2020

“Enhanced public health actions” are **announced** in the Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil local authority area “to limit the spread of coronavirus”. This included that employers should “encourage staff to work from home where possible”.

Further changes to quarantine list

10 September 2020

The **Welsh Government announces that**, from 12 September, people arriving in Wales from Hungary and Reunion must self-isolate for two weeks. Sweden will be removed from the quarantine list. This followed earlier amendments to the **coronavirus international travel regulations** adding the Greek islands of Santorini, Serifos and Tinos to the quarantine list effective from 10 September 2020.

Interventions in Caerphilly

7 September 2020

The **Welsh Government announces** local restrictions to control the Caerphilly outbreak. From 6pm on 8 September 2020: people will not be allowed to enter or leave the Caerphilly County Borough Council area without reasonable excuse; over 11s will be required to wear face coverings in shops; meeting indoors with other people and extended households will not be allowed.

UK cases rise

6 September 2020

2,988 new coronavirus cases were reported across the UK on 6 September, an increase of 1,175 cases from the previous day. 98 of these cases were in Wales, an increase of 21 cases from the previous day.

Caerphilly cluster

4 September 2020

A 'significant rise' in coronavirus cases in Caerphilly is believed to result from people not adhering to social distancing. A temporary testing centre is set up at Caerphilly leisure centre.

UK policy divergence on quarantine requirements

3 September 2020

The Health Minister announces that from 4 September 2020, people arriving in Wales from mainland Portugal, Gibraltar, French Polynesia and the Greek islands of Mykonos, Zakynthos, Lesbos, Paros and Antiparos and Crete will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. The Scottish Government also announced quarantine requirements for Greece (from 3 September) and Portugal from 5 September). The UK Government makes no changes to its quarantine list for England.

Quarantine changes

29 August 2020

Further changes are introduced to the list of countries and territories which are exempt from the quarantine rules. From this date people arriving in Wales from the Czech Republic, Jamaica and Switzerland will have to self-isolate for 14 days when they return. Passengers returning from Cuba and Singapore will no longer have to.

Holidaymakers urged to quarantine

28 August 2020

Following a number of positive cases being reported in Wales from people returning from holidays and not self-isolating, the Welsh Government urges people to "follow the quarantine rules".

Visits to care homes indoors to resume

28 August 2020

The Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething, confirms that indoor visits to care homes can resume from this date as well as visits to hospices and secure accommodation for children and young people. The

Minister says it is for each institution to decide exactly when they begin these visits again.

Fines for unlicensed music events

27 August 2020

The Welsh Government announces higher fines for the organisers of unlicensed music events where there are more than 30 people attending. It says this comes after discussions with the police and provides them with similar powers to those being introduced in England.

Face coverings in schools

26 August 2020

Welsh Government recommends that face coverings are worn by “all members of the public over 11 years in indoor settings in which social distancing cannot be maintained, including schools and school transport”. Schools will be required to carry out “risk assessments of their estates to determine whether face coverings should be recommended for their staff and young people in communal areas”. The Technical Advisory Group has published its review of face coverings in schools.

Quarantine changes

22 August 2020

Further changes are made to the coronavirus international travel regulations. From this date, people arriving in the UK from Austria, Croatia and Trinidad and Tobago must now self-isolate for 14 days. The quarantine requirement for travellers from Portugal is removed.

Meeting with family and friends

21 August 2020

Following the latest review of the coronavirus restrictions regulations, the First Minister confirms that from 22 August 2020, up to four households will be able to join together in Wales to form a bigger, extended household. The First Minister emphasised that conditions do not yet allow the easing of general restrictions on people meeting indoors. ‘This still means that we must not visit someone else’s home indoors unless we are part of an extended household with them or providing care. It also means we can only visit a business or premises indoors, such as a pub or restaurant, with members of our own household or extended household. It is, of course, possible to meet different people outdoors as long as social distancing is maintained’. Also from 22

August, limited indoor celebrations following a wedding, civil partnership, or funeral for up to 30 people may be permitted. The First Minister also indicated that over the next few weeks some limited outdoor events for up to 100 people will be piloted.

Report on coronavirus legislation

19 August 2020

The Welsh Government publishes its first report to the Senedd on the making of Coronavirus-related legislation and use of powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Coronavirus control plan

18 August 2020

The Welsh Government publishes a coronavirus control plan, setting out how people and organisations across Wales should work together to manage the risks of coronavirus as we head into autumn and winter.

Further investment in testing

18 August 2020

Welsh Government announces £32 million funding to improve coronavirus testing performance. This investment aims to speed up the processing of tests and ensure that testing and contact tracing systems are robust enough to deal with the next phase of the pandemic.

Extra funding for councils

17 August 2020

Welsh Ministers announce a £260 million support package for local authorities in Wales. The funding is intended to help cover increased costs, manage loss of income pressures, and fund additional cleaning requirements for schools. 'With the real possibility of further peaks during the autumn and winter months this investment will provide local authorities with the confidence to prepare their budgets for a potential second wave. The funds will be allocated on a claims basis'.

Public transport 'essential travel' restriction lifted

17 August 2020

'Essential travel' restriction on public transport is lifted in Wales. The essential travel message was introduced to prioritise the travel of key workers, as well as

<p>those with no alternative means of transport. The requirement to wear a face covering on public transport in Wales remains in place.</p>
<p>More countries added to quarantine list <i>14 August 2020</i></p> <p>The Welsh Government further <u>amends the coronavirus international travel regulations</u> to require anyone arriving in Wales from Aruba, France, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands and Turks and Caicos to self-isolate for 14 days. The same approach has been taken across the UK.</p>
<p>More family members can meet <i>14 August 2020</i></p> <p><u>First Minister announces changes</u> to allow more families to meet up in Wales. The intention is that from Saturday 22 August: up to four households will be able to join together to form a single, extended household; a meal following a wedding, civil partnership or funeral will be allowed for up to 30 people indoors if social distancing can be maintained. The Welsh Government will not be making any changes to the rules on people meeting indoors with others who aren't part of their household or extended household.</p>
<p>Winter protection plan <i>7 August 2020</i></p> <p>The Minister for Health and Social Care, <u>Vaughan Gething, announces</u> the development of a winter protection plan. The Welsh Government says the plan will “set out expectations for health and social care” and “will provide us with greater certainty on a number of critical areas”. The plan will be published in September.</p>
<p>Gyms and swimming pools to reopen <i>7 August 2020</i></p> <p>The <u>First Minister for Wales confirms</u> that swimming pools, indoor fitness studios, gyms and leisure centres will be able to reopen from Monday 10 August along with children's indoor play areas. The Welsh Government says it's continuing to explore whether changes can be made to enable people to meet indoors with other people who aren't part of their extended household.</p>
<p>£800m for the Welsh NHS <i>5 August 2020</i></p>

The [Welsh Government announces](#) a £800 million stabilisation package to help the Welsh NHS “to prepare for the anticipated challenges that winter will bring”. This includes “responding to a potential second wave of [coronavirus], alongside normal winter pressures”.

More restrictions to be eased in Wales

31 July 2020

Following the [latest review of the coronavirus restrictions](#), the Welsh Government sets out its plans for the further easing of lockdown restrictions in Wales over the next three weeks. From 3 August, pubs and restaurants will be able to re-open indoors, as will bowling alleys, bingo halls and auction houses. The restrictions on meeting outdoors will also be relaxed from 3 August, so that up to 30 people can meet outside provided social distancing is adhered to. From 10 August, if conditions allow, swimming pools, spas, gyms, leisure centres and children's indoor play areas will be able to re-open. The Welsh Government says it is exploring whether changes to the rules about people meeting indoors can be made from 17 August.

North of England restrictions

31 July 2020

The UK Government announces [local restrictions to be put in place in areas in the north of England](#) in response to an increase in coronavirus cases.

Care homes action plan

30 July 2020

The Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services sets out an [‘action plan’ for care homes](#) in Wales. This focuses on six key areas: infection prevention and control; personal protective equipment; general and clinical support for care homes; residents' wellbeing; social care workers' wellbeing, and financial sustainability.

Self-isolation period extended

30 July 2020

The four UK Chief Medical Officers make a [joint statement on extending the self-isolation period](#) from 7 to 10 days for people who are symptomatic or have a positive test result.

Coronavirus restrictions continue to be relaxed

27 July 2020

Beauty salons, cinemas, and museums can **reopen in Wales** from today. House viewings can also take place in unoccupied properties. New rules making it compulsory to wear a face covering on public transport, including taxis, come into effect.

Quarantine for travellers from Spain re-imposed

25 July 2020

Ministers from all four UK countries agree to **re-introduce quarantine measures for people arriving from Spain**, in response to an increased prevalence of coronavirus in parts of that country. From 26 July 2020, anyone arriving in the UK from Spain (including its islands) will need to self-isolate for 14 days. The **Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020** give effect to this in Wales.

Campsites and hotels re-open

25 July 2020

Tourist accommodation with shared facilities, such as camping sites and all hotels are able to re-open in Wales. Underground attractions can also reopen from today.

Funding to support universities and colleges

22 July 2020

Welsh Government announces £50 million additional **funding for universities and colleges** - 'The support is part of the Welsh Government's actions to support students and Wales' major education institutions and provide the skills and learning in response to the economic impact of the coronavirus'. £27 million will be provided to higher education institutions, with £23 million to support students in further education colleges and sixth forms.

Reopening of playgrounds and funfairs

20 July 2020

From this date, playgrounds and outdoor gyms will be able to reopen in Wales, also funfairs (indoors and outdoors).

Report on coronavirus deaths in Wales

17 July 2020

First **review of coronavirus deaths in Wales** is published. The Technical Advisory Group's report found that during 1 March and 31 May, coronavirus was a factor in 24.1% of all deaths in Wales. The equivalent proportion of coronavirus

related deaths in England was 42%. In Wales, mortality rates from coronavirus were highest in the Cardiff and Vale Health Board area, with death rates highest among older people, people from BAME communities, and deprived communities. Men have consistently higher mortality rates across all ethnic groups. It states that the most critical factors in reducing excess deaths in any future wave of coronavirus are likely to be: early recognition of a resurgence of infection in the community, and; a continued focus on identifying and protecting the most vulnerable people in society.

Update on shielding in Wales

16 July 2020

The Chief Medical Officer for Wales confirms that people in Wales who are shielding will no longer need to do so after 16 August.

New testing strategy

15 July 2020

A new Wales coronavirus testing strategy is released, setting out the Welsh Government's testing priorities for the next phase. 'This strategy sets out how testing will work alongside the easing of lock down measures to ensure that we can keep the number of daily cases low, but also sets out how we will continue to build capacity for the possibility of a second wave until an effective vaccine with long-term protective efficacy becomes available and widely used'.

Face coverings to be mandatory on public transport

13 July 2020

The First Minister announces that it will become mandatory in Wales to wear a three layer face covering on public transport, including taxis, from 27 July 2020. He also said that some businesses may ask people to wear a face covering before entering their premises.

Further lockdown restrictions to be lifted in Wales

10 July 2020

Following the latest review of the coronavirus restrictions regulations in Wales, the First Minister sets out plans to ease lockdown restrictions further. The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 were revoked and replaced with Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020. From 11 July 2020, self-contained holiday accommodation without shared facilities can reopen. From 13 July 2020, a number of services/businesses can reopen if they are able to do so safely,

including hairdressers, outdoor areas of pubs and restaurants, outdoor cinemas, most indoor visitor attractions, and places of worship. The First Minister also announced the lifting of restrictions in other areas throughout July, including those relating to playgrounds and outdoor gyms (from 20 July 2020), other tourist accommodation (from 25 July 2020), 'close contact' services such as beauty salons, indoor cinemas and museums, and full reopening of the housing market (from 27 July 2020).

Welsh back to school plans

9 July 2020

Education Minister announces 'back to school' plans in Wales from 1 September 2020. Schools will return to full capacity, with only limited social distancing within contact groups. The Minister also announced £29 million funding to 'recruit, recover and raise standards' in Welsh schools. The Welsh Government has published the Technical Advisory Group's advice which recommended a September return to school.

Quarantine restrictions in Wales eased

9 July 2020

Welsh Government agrees to amend the *Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) Regulations 2020* to exempt those travelling from a list of countries from quarantine requirements. The amended regulations will come into force on 10 July.

Travel restrictions lifted and 'extended' households allowed

6 July 2020

The requirement to 'stay local' is lifted from today, meaning people are allowed travel within Wales and into Wales. 'It will also mean outdoor visitor attractions can open and it will pave the way for the tourism sector to begin re-opening from 11 July, if conditions allow'. Also from this date, people from two separate households will be able to join together to form one exclusive, extended household. This easing of lockdown measures was confirmed by the First Minister in a statement on 3 July 2020.

English pubs and hairdressers reopen

4 July 2020

Pubs, restaurants and hairdressers reopen in England. Other changes from this date in England include two households will be able to meet up in any setting with social distancing, reopening of holiday accommodation sites and some

leisure facilities and tourist attractions, as well as libraries, social clubs, places of worship and community centres. These changes were **announced** by the UK Prime Minister on 23 June 2020.

International travel restrictions eased in England

3 July 2020

The UK Government announces that from 10 July 2020, people will be able to travel to countries identified as 'lower-risk' without having to self-isolate on return to England. 'The Devolved Administrations will set out their own approach to exemptions [from self-isolation], and so passengers returning to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should ensure they follow the laws and guidance which applies there'.

Phased reopening for hospitality and tourism sector

2 July 2020

Wales' International Relations Minister sets out a timetable for phased reopening of the tourism sector. Bars, restaurants and cafes with outdoor spaces will prepare to re-open outdoors from 13 July 2020. 'A final decision about outdoor re-opening will be made at the next review of the coronavirus regulations on 9 July and will depend on whether rates of coronavirus are continuing to fall. Future decisions about indoor re-opening will be made later and will depend on the success of the first phase of outdoor opening'. Also subject to the review of coronavirus regulations on 9 July, the date that bookings for self-contained holiday accommodation can be accepted is being brought forward to 11 July from 13 July, to help with the pattern of Saturday-to-Saturday bookings.

Quarantine for international travellers remains in Wales

30 June 2020

First Minister makes a statement that following a review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Wales) Regulations 2020, the requirement for people arriving or returning from overseas to self-isolate for 14 days will remain in place in Wales. 'The Regulations may be amended in due course pending the outcome of ongoing discussions with the other UK administrations and full consideration of the medical and scientific advice underpinning any changes which may be proposed'.

Schools in Wales re-open

29 June 2020

Children return to school in Wales in a phased approach. Year groups will be split into cohorts with staggered start times and breaks. It is expected that, at most, a third of pupils will be present at any one time. Updated [guidance for schools and frequently asked questions](#) are published on the Welsh Government website.

Outbreaks at meat and food processing sites

24 June 2020

[Health Minister makes a statement](#) on two coronavirus outbreaks centred on meat and food processing sites in Wales, at the 2 Sisters plant in Llangefni, Anglesey and the Rowan Foods plant in Wrexham. New [guidance for meat processing and food production plants](#) on preventing and managing outbreaks of coronavirus was subsequently issued on 26 June 2020.

Report on BAME coronavirus outcomes

22 June 2020

A [report on the factors influencing negative Covid-19 outcomes for individuals from BAME backgrounds](#) is published. In a [statement](#) on 25 June 2020, the First Minister said the Welsh Government would give detailed consideration to the report and provide a formal response to its recommendations shortly.

Review of the coronavirus restrictions

19 June 2020

The First Minister announces changes to the coronavirus restrictions following the [fourth review](#) of the regulations. From 22 June all non-essential retail business, childcare facilities, the housing market can re-open; and private prayer in places of worship can take place. The First Minister also reiterated that pupils will be returning to schools on 29 June.

The requirement for people to stay local and within about five miles from their homes will remain in place for a further two weeks. However, the First Minister said that travel outside on a person's local area is allowed on compassionate grounds. This includes "to visit a loved one who needs help or to visit someone at a care home outdoors". The First Minister is looking to lift this restriction on 6 July.

Use of dexamethasone to treat COVID-19

17 June 2020

The [Health Minister announces](#) that the guidance for hospitals treating COVID-19 has been updated to include the use of dexamethasone. This follows an announcement by Oxford University that dexamethasone significantly reduces mortality amongst patients who need oxygen or ventilation.

Face coverings recommended in Wales

9 June 2020

The [Welsh Government is recommending](#) “that 3 layer face coverings should be used in situations where social distancing measures can be more difficult...for example, on public transport”. However, face coverings will not be mandatory. The Welsh Government also made it clear that wearing a face covering doesn't replace the need for social distancing or hand washing. It also reiterated that anyone with coronavirus symptoms “must self-isolate for a minimum of 7 days and get a test as quickly as possible”.

The Welsh Government has also published guidance on [how to make a 3 layer face covering](#) and [frequently asked questions](#).

Quarantine for UK arrivals now in force

8 June 2020

The [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) come into force – residents and visitors entering the country from overseas must self-isolate for 14 days to prevent the further spread of coronavirus. This reflects a common position across the four UK nations. There are a number of [exemptions to the new border rules](#).

Return to school in Wales announced

3 June 2020

Wales' [Education Minister announces that schools will reopen](#) for all age groups on 29 June 2020. Term will be extended by one week to 27 July 2020. The Welsh Government publishes a document setting out its latest understanding of [coronavirus in relation to children and education](#). Schools in [England](#) have been open since 1 June 2020. In [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#), pupils will not return to schools before August 2020 when the new academic years there begin.

Contact tracing begins in Wales

1 June 2020

With [contact tracing being rolled out](#), anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted by a contact tracer and asked to provide details of

everyone they have been in close contact with. Those close contacts will be contacted and asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

The Minister for Health says that 8 June “contact tracing will be supported by a new online system” so people will have the option to provide the details of contacts online.

Changes for those shielding

1 June 2020

Wales' Minister for Health announces two changes for people who are shielding from today, but are advised to do so at times that are less busy to reduce the risk of contact with others. Firstly, they can exercise outdoors an unlimited number of times a day. Secondly, they can meet with another household outside on the same terms as the everyone else in Wales.

The Minister said that they should continue to follow the other advice on shielding, as previously given, and all who are shielding “will receive a letter from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales before 15 June setting out the next steps”.

Stay local

29 May 2020

In Wales, following the three week review of the regulations, the First Minister announces that the ‘stay at home’ message was changing to ‘stay local’. From 1 June **two households can meet outdoors** and social distancing and good hygiene practices should continue to be followed. It was stressed that people should **remain local and use “five miles as a guide”** but this is “a flexible concept which can vary depending on people’s circumstances”. The First Minister also signalled that “**non-essential retail businesses should use the next three weeks to begin to prepare to reopen**”.

From 1 June in England, groups of 6 people can meet outdoors. Since 13 May people in England have been able to travel unlimited distances.

UK border measures announced

22 May 2020

The UK Home Secretary announces new public health measures for all UK arrivals to help guard against a second wave of coronavirus. This includes 14 days self-isolation for anyone entering the UK, with some limited exemptions.

Welsh Government referred to the EHRC

21 May 2020

The [Older People's Commissioner for Wales](#) calls for the Welsh Government to be investigated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) over concerns that older people's human rights may have been breached in care homes. The [Commissioner has concerns](#) that older people's rights may not have been sufficiently protected, in these settings and across health and social care more widely. The EHRC responded to say it 'remains deeply concerned about serious potential breaches of older people's human rights during this pandemic'. The [EHRC said](#) it is working closely with the Commissioner and "is considering the use of all its powers to protect older people's rights".

Home testing rolled out

18 May 2020

From this date, people in Wales with symptoms of coronavirus should be able to [request a home coronavirus test](#) via an online booking service. This is part of a new, UK-wide system for ordering home testing kits. Critical workers in Wales are also able to request home testing kits via the online service, "with tests prioritised towards these workers over members of the public according to capacity". The Welsh Government has published [guidance on how to use the home testing kit](#).

Symptoms update

18 May 2020

The four UK Chief Medical Officers issue an [update to coronavirus symptoms](#) to include loss of smell or taste. As of this date, all individuals should self-isolate if they develop at least one of: a new continuous cough; fever; loss of smell or taste (anosmia).

Testing for all care homes

16 May 2020

The Minister for Health, Vaughan Gething, [announces](#) that all care home residents and staff are able to access tests on the UK Government portal.

Framework for education and childcare

15 May 2020

The Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, [publishes a framework](#) outlining the principles and current thinking for the next phase of education and childcare in Wales.

Traffic light guide out of lockdown

15 May 2020

The First Minister for Wales outlines the [roadmap for easing the restrictions](#) in Wales. It includes nine areas with four steps moving from the lockdown, to red, orange and green. The document says that these steps “represent broad phases” and that Wales “will not move wholesale from one phase to the next”. It is possible, therefore, to be in the red phase in one area and green in another.

Test, Trace, Protect

13 May 2020

The Welsh Government publishes its [testing strategy](#) to “enhance health surveillance” and “undertake effective and extensive contact tracing”. It says that so far testing has focussed on people in hospitals, care homes and symptomatic key workers and the next phase will mean testing anyone in the community with symptoms.

Face coverings not compulsory

12 May 2020

The Chief Medical Officer for Wales [said in a statement](#) that he is “not recommending the compulsory wearing of face coverings by everyone when they leave home – this should be a matter of personal choice”.

Prime Minister tells England to stay alert

10 May 2020

In a [televised address](#) the UK Prime Minister outlines changes to lockdown restrictions in England and promotes a new ‘stay alert’ message. Further details will be provided to the UK Parliament on 11 May 2020. The ‘stay at home’ message remains in place in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Scientific advice published

8 May 2020

The [Welsh Government publishes updated modelling](#) from its Technical Advisory Cell (TAC). TAC’s advice, as well as that from the UK Government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), is used to inform the Welsh Government’s response to coronavirus.

Lockdown in Wales extended

8 May 2020

[Lockdown is extended for a further three weeks in Wales](#) with some minor amendments to the restrictions: people may go out to exercise more than once a day but must stay local; garden centres may open as long as they comply with physical distancing; local authorities can begin to plan for the safe reopening of libraries and municipal recycling centres. The [Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) were amended on 11 May to reflect this change.

'Test, track and trace' plan

5 May 2020

The Health Minister [outlines the Welsh Government's Public Health Protection Response Plan](#). The Plan 'will set out how an effective 'test, track and trace' programme and digital technology will be pivotal to controlling transmission of the virus'.

CYPE Committee question Health Minister

5 May 2020

The [Health and Social Services Minister and Deputy Minister answer questions](#) from Children' Young People and Education Committee Members on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on children's physical and mental health, and on health and social care services.

Support for universities and students

4 May 2020

The Education Minister publishes a [higher education policy statement](#) setting out how the Welsh Government is supporting universities and students dealing with the impact of coronavirus.

£500 payment for care workers

1 May 2020

First Minister of Wales announces a [£500 extra payment for social care staff](#). "The payment provides further recognition for an often "under-valued and overlooked" workforce. The payment will be available to some 64,600 care home workers and domiciliary care workers throughout Wales".

Past the peak?

30 April 2020

The [UK Prime Minister says](#) at the daily press conference that “we are past the peak of this disease”.

Health Minister appears before committee

30 April 2020

The [Health, Social Care and Sport Committee](#) scrutinises the Welsh Government's response to coronavirus. The Health Minister answers questions on [personal protective equipment](#) (PPE), testing and an 'exit strategy' for lifting the current coronavirus restrictions.

Update on ventilators

29 April 2020

Wales' Health Minister provides an [update on critical care capacity and ventilators](#). Of the additional 1,035 ventilators being procured by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and through UK arrangements (as per his [statement](#) of 6 April), 353 have been received. The Minister said “The delivery of the ventilators procured through both the NHS Wales Shared Services and UK arrangements has always been on a phased basis over a 13 week period, based on the original projection of a peak occurring in June/July. There has always been sufficient ventilator capacity within NHS Wales throughout the COVID-19 period of activity”.

More drive-through testing

28 April 2020

Two new testing centres will open and online booking service will be rolled out in Wales. A [Welsh Government press release says](#) that the testing centre in Llandudno will open on 29 April, and the Carmarthen centre will start testing critical workers on 30 April 2020.

Deaths data review

28 April 2020

Welsh Government publishes a [review of the mechanism for reporting COVID-19 deaths](#) in Wales. The review followed the under-reporting of a significant number of deaths by Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board. Issues were also identified with data provided by Hywel Dda Health Board.

Assembly committee scrutinises Education Minister

28 April 2020

The Children, Young People and Education Committee [questions the Minister](#) about the impact of coronavirus on pre- and post-16 education. Earlier, the Minister issued a [statement](#) describing a phased approach to the reopening of schools - "schools will not immediately return to operating at full capacity". The Minister emphasised that any move to reopen schools was not imminent.

Death in service

27 April 2020

Wales' Health Minister [establishes a COVID-19 Death in Service Scheme](#) for NHS and social care frontline workers. Under the Scheme, eligible beneficiaries will receive a one-off sum of £60,000, regardless of individual workers' salaries. The Scheme will be time-limited, providing cover for the duration of the pandemic and will apply retrospectively from the 25 March 2020.

Exit strategy framework

24 April 2020

Welsh Government publishes its '[framework for recovery](#)' from the coronavirus pandemic. The [First Minister said](#) "The whole of the UK entered 'lockdown' in the same ways and at the same time, and our preference as a government would be that all four nations retain a common approach to lifting the restrictions. However, we have been consistent in making clear that we will take the right decisions in the interests of the people of Wales". The Counsel General and Minister for European Transition, Jeremy Miles, will be coordinating the [recovery preparations](#).

Stay at home restrictions revised

24 April 2020

The [stay at home regulations are revised in Wales](#) to clarify that people who leave their home with a reasonable excuse (such as for essential shopping, healthcare or work) cannot remain outside to do other things. New arrangements also allow people with certain health conditions or disabilities to leave home to exercise more than once a day. This is particularly aimed at helping families with children with autism and learning disabilities.

Support for hospices

19 April 2020

Wales' Health Minister [announces](#) a £6.3 million three-month package of additional support for hospices.

Review of testing

18 April 2020

Welsh Government publishes a [review of its coronavirus testing](#) regime. The review describes a range of delays and supply chain issues and confirms that “we will not reach 5000 tests by the 3rd week of April”. It includes a commitment to provide weekly updates setting out expected and actual increases in testing capacity.

Stay at home measures continue

16 April 2020

Following the [UK Government's media briefing](#), the [First Minister said](#) that during a COBR meeting each of the four nations agreed to continue the current stay at home measures for a further three weeks. The Welsh Government published a [statement on the review of the regulations](#) underpinning these restrictions.

Statutory Sick Pay extended

16 April 2020

[New regulations](#) come into force in Wales, England and Scotland to extend the statutory sick pay to include those who are extremely vulnerable and at high risk of severe illness from the coronavirus and are advised to stay at home for 12 weeks.

Social care funding

13 April 2020

Wales' Health Minister, Vaughan Gething, [announces an extra £40m to support adult social care services](#) during the coronavirus pandemic. “The Welsh Government has been working with local authorities and other partners to identify the additional resources needed to meet the extra demands on adult social care services. We will review this allocation and potentially make further money available if needed in the future”.

Expansion of video consultations

12 April 2020

Welsh Government announces [further investment to roll out video consultation service](#) to secondary and community care. “This system will enable key services to maintain a visual link with patients, this is especially

important in some services delivered in the community, including mental health services”.

Funding for charities

8 April 2020

The UK Chancellor announces £750 million of funding for the charity sector. A share of this funding will be allocated through the Barnett formula to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Critical care

5 April 2020

Health Minister issues statement about critical care capacity and availability of ventilators in Wales. He said that the number of critical care beds within Wales is “increasing on a daily basis”. As at 3 April, there are 353 critical care or invasively ventilated beds (there are normally around 153). He also highlighted that an additional 1,035 ventilators are being procured by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and through UK arrangements – “We expect Wales to receive a population-based share of UK procurement”.

Social distancing - workplaces and funerals

4 April 2020

Under amended regulations for Wales, businesses will have to take all reasonable steps to ensure the two metre social distancing rule is maintained between people on their premises. Guidance will be issued to explain what employers can reasonably be expected to do. The regulations also clarify the arrangements for funerals and crematoriums. The regulations, which amend the *Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020*, will come into force on 7 April 2020.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

2 April 2020

Following a rapid review of PPE across the UK, new UK wide guidance is published.

Virtual GP appointments

2 April 2020

A video consultation service is rolled out to all GP practices in Wales.

Extra economic support

30 March 2020

Wales' First Minister **announces** a new £500 million Economic Resilience Fund to provide additional support to the Welsh economy, businesses and charities.

Declaration of threat to public health in Wales

29 March 2020

The effect of the **declaration** is to enable the Welsh Ministers to use the powers conferred on them by Part 4 of Schedule 22 to the Coronavirus Act 2020, relating to the prohibition or restriction of events or gatherings and to the closure of premises or imposition of restrictions on persons entering or remaining inside premises.

Statutory sick pay from day 1

28 March 2020

New **regulations** come into force in Wales, England and Scotland which allow statutory sick pay to be paid from the first day of an employee's absence due to the coronavirus. This includes those who are unable to work due to having coronavirus symptoms and those in the household of someone with the symptoms.

New testing

28 March 2020

The Health Minister, **Vaughan Gething, announces** a new coronavirus testing plan for Wales. This includes the introduction of a new antibody test (being tested in the UK in the coming week) which will identify whether people have recently had the virus and if they have an immunity.

Principality Stadium to become a field hospital

27 March 2020

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board **announces that** the Principality Stadium in Cardiff will be set up as a temporary hospital to provide 2,000 extra beds to the NHS. This will be supported by £8 million capital funding from Welsh Government.

Plans are also being progressed to develop additional bed capacity in other parts of Wales. **New regulations** came into force on 30 March 2020 allowing a local authority to undertake development on its land in response to the coronavirus emergency without needing to obtain planning permission. As a

result, for example, local authorities could use leisure centres as temporary hospitals.

The Health Minister provided [further details on field hospitals in Wales](#) in a written statement on 5 April 2020.

Closure of public paths and land

27 March 2020

Using the new powers to enforce social distancing, a number of [public paths and land in Wales are closed](#) including Snowdon, Pen y Fan and sections of the Pembrokeshire coast.

Local authority care and support

26 March 2020

[New regulations](#) were made in Wales to bring into force provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 to relax local authority duties relating to assessing and meeting [needs for care and support](#). Local authorities now only have to meet needs in the most serious cases where someone is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Carrying forward annual leave

26 March 2020

New [regulations](#) come into force across Great Britain allowing workers, who cannot reasonably take annual leave due to the coronavirus, to carry over their holiday into the next two leave years.

Support for the self-employed

26 March 2020

The Chancellor outlines a new UK [income support scheme for self-employed people](#) who have been adversely affected by the coronavirus.

Police powers

26 March 2020

New regulations come into force giving the police powers to enforce social distancing in [Wales](#) and [England](#). People not complying with the regulations can be directed to return home (or be removed from where they are and returned home), and can be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Coronavirus Act 2020

25 March 2020

<p>Following agreement by both Houses of Parliament the Coronavirus Bill receives Royal Assent.</p>
<p>Legislative consent</p> <p><i>24 March 2020</i></p> <p>Assembly agrees the Legislative Consent Motion on the Coronavirus Bill. When the UK Parliament wishes to legislate on a subject which is devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, convention requires it to receive the Assembly's consent before it passes the legislation in question. This consent is given through Legislative Consent Motions (LCMs).</p>
<p>Shielding the extremely vulnerable</p> <p><i>24 March 2020</i></p> <p>The Welsh Government published guidance for those who are identified as extremely vulnerable to the coronavirus. This includes information on the delivery of medicine and food as well as what to do if you're living with somebody who is vulnerable.</p>
<p>Prime Minister's address</p> <p><i>23 March 2020</i></p> <p>The UK Prime Minister addresses the nation - all people are now required to stay at home except for very limited purposes. Non-essential shops and community spaces will close, and gatherings of more than two people in public are prohibited. These measures are enforceable by the police and other relevant authorities. The First Minister of Wales makes a statement on the new measures.</p>
<p>Tourism clampdown</p> <p><i>23 March 2020</i></p> <p>The Welsh Government announces that caravan parks, campsites and tourist hotspots will be closed to visitors "from today". Regulations requiring the closure of holiday parks, camping sites, amusement arcades and indoor play centres came into force in Wales on 24 March 2020. These also provide for the closure of certain public footpaths and land. These regulations were later replaced by the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 on 26 March 2020.</p>
<p>Travelling in Wales</p>

22 March 2020

The **First Minister says** that “social distancing includes avoiding all but essential travel and if people don't follow this advice we will have no choice but to use powers to enforce it”.

Forced closure of some businesses

20 March 2020

The **Prime Minister announces** that the Government are “telling cafes, pubs, bars, restaurants to close tonight” as well as “nightclubs, theatres, cinemas, gyms and leisure centres”. Regulations requiring the closure of businesses selling food or drink for consumption on the premises came into force in **England** and **Wales the following day**. These regulations were later replaced by the **Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020** on 26 March 2020.

Coronavirus job retention scheme

20 March 2020

The **Chancellor announces** the creation of a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme where any UK employers will be able to contact HMRC for a grant to cover 80% of the salary of retained workers. The Scheme will cover the costs of wages backdated to 1 March 2020 and is initially set up to cover at least 3 months.

Emergency Bill introduced

19 March 2020

The **Coronavirus Bill 2019-21** is introduced in the House of Commons. According to the **Explanatory Notes**, the Bill “ensures that the agencies and services involved – schools, hospitals, the police etc. – have the tools and powers they need. Each of the four nations of the UK has its own set of laws, and thus these tools and powers differ to varying degrees in each area. Consistency of outcome will be achieved by making the range of tools and powers consistent across the UK”. Senedd Research's summary provides more **information on the Bill and its implications for Wales**.

Committee questions Minister on school closures

19 March 2020

The Education Minister appears before the **Children, Young People and Education Committee** to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on education, including the cancellation of this summer's GCSE and A-level exams.

<p>Schools in Wales close</p> <p><i>18 March 2020</i></p> <p>The Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, announces that the Easter break will be bought forward and schools across Wales “will close for statutory provision of education” by 20 March 2020. However, schools are open to children who are vulnerable and children of key workers who cannot be cared for at home.</p>
<p>Health protection regulations for Wales</p> <p><i>18 March 2020</i></p> <p>Regulations come into force which provide for “the imposition of proportionate restrictions” on individuals where it’s suspected that they may have coronavirus. Similar regulations were made in England in February. These regulations were replaced by the Coronavirus Act 2020 which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020.</p>
<p>Welsh Government briefs Health Committee</p> <p><i>18 March 2020</i></p> <p>The Committee receive a technical briefing from the Chief Medical Officer on the response to COVID-19 in Wales, and from the Health Minister on the emergency legislation.</p>
<p>Legislative proposals</p> <p><i>17 March 2020</i></p> <p>The UK Government publishes details of the proposed measures to be included in the fast-tracked coronavirus legislation.</p>
<p>Support for business</p> <p><i>17 March 2020</i></p> <p>The Minister for Finance, Rebecca Evans, announced support for small businesses in Wales. Retail, leisure and hospitality businesses with a rateable value of £51,000 or less will receive 100% reduction in business rates, and pubs with a rateable value between £51,000 and £100,000 will receive a £5,000 reduction.</p>
<p>Assembly business revised</p> <p><i>17 March 2020</i></p>

Assembly business will prioritise COVID-19 and all non-time-critical business is suspended. The Senedd building closes to visitors.

Updated advice and social distancing

16 March 2020

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, updated advice that if anybody in a household has a new continuous cough or high temperature the whole household should self-isolate for 14 days.

The Prime Minister also said that all non-essential contact and unnecessary travel should stop, and people should start to work from home where possible. This social distancing is particularly important for people over 70 years old, pregnant women and those with some health conditions, he added that "it will be necessary to go further and to ensure that those with the most serious health conditions are largely shielded from social contact for around 12 weeks". The UK Government said they "will no longer be supporting mass gatherings with emergency workers".

Suspension of non-urgent NHS appointments

13 March 2020

Vaughan Gething announces the suspension of a number of NHS services including non-urgent outpatient appointments and non-urgent surgical admissions and procedures. The Minister says that "these actions will allow for services and beds to be reallocated and for staff to be redeployed and retained in priority areas".

Statutory sick pay regulations

13 March 2020

New regulations come into force across Wales, England and Scotland that those who are self-isolating, in line with guidance relating to COVID-19, are deemed to be incapable of working and are entitled to statutory sick pay.

Delay phase

12 March 2020

The UK has moved into the delay phase and the UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the UK from 'moderate' to 'high'. New advice issued says to self-isolate for 7 days if you develop a high temperature or a new continuous cough. You do not need to go to a GP, pharmacy or hospital. It's recommended to only phone 111 if your symptoms don't get better after 7 days or your condition gets worse.

Video health consultations

12 March 2020

The Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething, announces that a web-based service will allow people who are self-isolating to speak to and receive advice from NHS healthcare professionals via video.

Pandemic

11 March 2020

World Health Organization describes COVID-19 as a pandemic, but emphasises that this “does not change WHO’s assessment of the threat posed by this coronavirus. It doesn’t change what WHO is doing, and it doesn’t change what countries should do”. (The term ‘pandemic’ refers to the spread of a new, infectious disease across multiple countries, rather than its severity or numbers of cases/deaths).

Budget 2020

11 March 2020

The UK Chancellor announces a £12 billion package of measures to support public services, individuals and businesses affected by COVID-19. This includes additional funding for services, statutory sick pay changes, and a temporary increase in the Business Rates retail discount (which would be in England only). The Welsh Government welcomes the announcement, but wants further clarity about how the measures will be funded in full. “We are in ongoing discussions with the UK Government to ensure Wales gets the funding it needs to deal with the impact, especially in the context of the pressures our demographic makeup could present”.

‘COBRA Cymru’

10 March 2020

The First Minister confirms that a core ministerial group has been established and is meeting weekly, “to make sure that we are in a position to respond urgently and immediately where such a response is necessary”. The Health and Social Services Minister also highlights that NHS Wales’ Chief Executive is establishing an ‘NHS Wales and social services planning and response team’, which will “provide ongoing support, co-ordination and integration of the health and social services response”.

Containment phase

9 March 2020

The UK Prime Minister chairs an emergency COBRA meeting, attended by the First Ministers of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister announces that the UK remains in the first 'containment' phase of the outbreak, but that extensive preparations are being made for a move to the 'delay' phase.

Emergency legislation

8 March 2020

UK Government confirms that there will be an upcoming COVID-19 emergency bill, as part of the UK's phased response to the virus. The legislation, which will apply across the four UK nations, provides Wales with emergency powers to respond "quickly and effectively" to the outbreak.

Notifiable disease

5 March 2020

The Health Protection (Notification) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 are made, making COVID-19 a notifiable disease in Wales. Equivalent regulations for England were made the same day. Scotland was the first UK country to make COVID-19 a notifiable disease (from 22 February 2020), followed by Northern Ireland (29 February 2020).

Health Committee briefed

4 March 2020

A special meeting of the Welsh Cabinet is held. The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee receive a technical briefing from the Director General of Health and Social Services and NHS Wales' Chief Executive, the Chief Medical Officer, and Public Health Wales' lead.

UK action plan

3 March 2020

UK Government publishes its Coronavirus action plan: a guide to what you can expect. This joint action plan between the UK Government and devolved Governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland sets out a phased response to the virus. This includes the 'contain phase', the 'delay phase', a 'research phase' through to the 'mitigate phase'. The action plan also said that government would "consider legislative options, if necessary, to help systems and services work more effectively in tackling the outbreak" and would ensure

that “any necessary changes to legislation [were] taken forward as quickly as possible”.

First case in Wales

28 February 2020

Wales' first coronavirus case confirmed. The patient had travelled back to Wales from northern Italy.

Health protection regulations

10 February 2020

For England, regulations were made under the *Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984*, which provide health professionals with the powers to “keep individuals in isolation where [they] believe there is a reasonable risk an individual may have the virus”. In response, Wales' Health Minister said he was considering whether similar legislation was needed in Wales. The Welsh Ministers do have powers to make equivalent regulations for Wales under the 1984 Act. These regulations were replaced by the Coronavirus Act 2020 when it received royal ascent on 25 March 2020.

No NHS charges for overseas visitors

4 February 2020

The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2020 are laid. These exempt overseas visitors from being charged for the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 in Wales. Equivalent regulations are also in force in England (from 29 January 2020).

Wash your hands

1 February 2020

The UK Government launches a public information campaign to advise on how to slow the spread of COVID-19, similar to the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ campaign and emphasising the importance of hand-washing. The Welsh Government said it was working with Public Health Wales to support the campaign.

UK risk level

31 January 2020

First UK coronavirus cases confirmed. The UK Chief Medical Officers advised an increase in the UK risk level from low to moderate. However, it was made

clear that “this does not mean [they] think the risk to individuals in the UK has changed [...] but that the UK should plan for all eventualities”.

Public health emergency

30 January 2020

World Health Organization declares that COVID-19 had met the criteria of being a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

Coronavirus first seen in China

31 December 2019

A number of cases of pneumonia were reported in Wuhan, China, which were later identified as a new strain of coronavirus which had not been seen in humans before: the novel coronavirus (referred to as COVID-19 from 11 February 2020).