

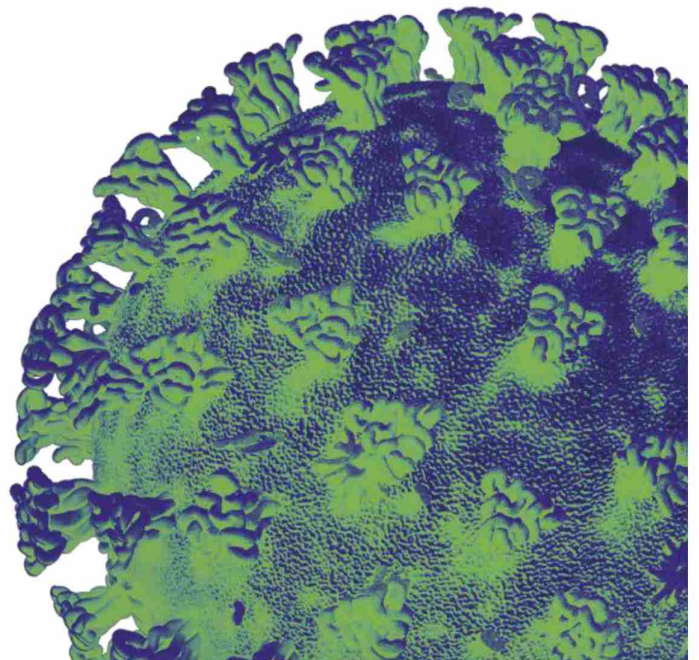
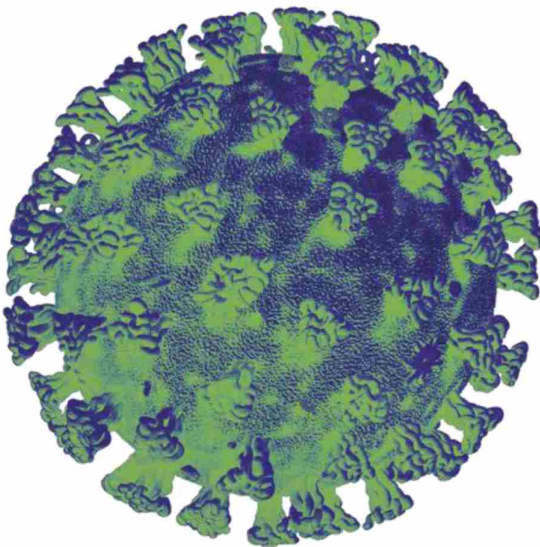
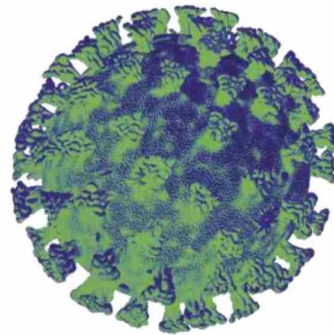


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Technical Advisory Cell

Summary of advice

18th September 2020



Technical Advisory Cell: Summary Brief

18th September 2020

Top-line summary

- The epidemic is evolving rapidly across Wales and the UK, meaning that estimates become out of date very quickly. There is consensus that the situation continues to be serious. This is highlighted by the sad news that we have begun again this week to have deaths from COVID-19 recorded in Wales.
- The number of positive cases per 100,000 of the population in Wales has increased significantly over the last two weeks but this has not produced a significant increase in admissions and deaths.
- We believe that the SAGE estimate of the R number is lower than the true R number in Wales. This is because the SAGE estimate is based on trends in admissions and deaths as well as cases and survey data, all of which have a time lag.
- A package of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) on local and national scale may be needed to bring R back below 1. Some NPIs may need to be in place for a significant length of time, though an earlier and more comprehensive response is likely to reduce the length of time for which they are required.
- When re-introducing NPIs, sufficient time is needed to establish whether these interventions have truly been successful. This is because there are also time lags associated with infectivity, symptom development, testing capacity and public behaviour.
- Interventions differ in their effectiveness in reducing transmission and have different types and levels of harm associated with them. It is increasingly important to consider the indirect harms associated with COVID-19.
- The public version of the Reasonable Worst Case (RWC) for Wales has now been published. While we do not expect the scenario to be accurate from week to week, we are monitoring epidemiological data in Wales against this.
- Results from the Office for National Statistics infection study show that for the week 30th August to 5th September, an estimated 0.05% of the community population in Wales had COVID-19. This equates to approximately 1 person in every 2,000, or a total of 1,500 people during this time. Care should be taken when interpreting these figures due to low sample sizes.

- The latest results from the Public Engagement Survey on Health and Wellbeing during Coronavirus Measures show that 52% of people came into close contact (within 1 metre) with at least 3 people from outside their household/extended household in the last 7 days. 40% reported that others outside their household/extended household had been in their house in the last week and 28% reported going into one or more other houses in the last week (excluding their extended household). These are similar percentages to the end of July.
- Mobility data for Wales and the UK show little change from last week.
- In mid-April mobility of Facebook users in Wales was 50% lower than the baseline, this is 1% lower than the baseline and is up slightly from last week. 22% of Facebook users in Wales are staying put, similar to 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 fallen slightly in the last week. Relative to the baseline the data are higher than the other nations, but the gap has narrowed further in the last week. Requests for walking directions shows no change in the last week, whilst requests for public transport routes has fallen.
- The Google mobility data shows increases in workplaces in the last week (which may coincide with the end of the summer holidays the previous week). Retail & recreation shows a fall, whilst most other categories show little change.
- 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 continued throughout August. The first week in September showed reductions in movement in Wales, with the most recent week showing stability.
- Anonymised and aggregated mobile phone data from O2 has shown that trips starting in Caerphilly have fallen by 8 percentage points in the last week (to Tuesday 15th), compared to 1 percentage point for Wales. Data from Google (to the 11th) shows reductions in mobility in Caerphilly for many of the categories.
- 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.