

recommended a 2-3 week hard firebreak to bring R below 1 in order to lessen the force and slow the growth of the epidemic in Wales.

15. Advice from TAC was the longer and harder the firebreak the greater the gains in suppressing the virus but the greater the wider harms to society and the economy. While the financial and public acceptance costs have since fallen following the surprise UK Government announcement of a longer lockdown in England, there are significant issues about the confidence in the Welsh Government and trust of the public as well as significant economic costs. A major change in position could undermine trust in the Welsh Government and affect future adherence to public health messages. Whilst extending the firebreak in line with the UK Government decisions in England would undoubtedly have immediate health benefits, the post-firebreak regime relies on behaviour change to be sustainable, which could be undermined over the medium and long-term if it is seen by a breach of trust with the public.
16. During the firebreak, discussions took place across the Welsh Government on post firebreak options followed by a series of meetings with stakeholders (local authorities, the police, business representatives and trade unions) on 28th October. There was a high degree of consensus for: a principles based approach; the need for simple rules on the number of people allowed to meet; and on the importance of clear guidance and information provision, both general and targeted at key groups. Stakeholders noted people value the opportunity to meet in a controlled environment. If that opportunity is not available, there is likely to be more meeting up in riskier, informal, unsupervised settings. They also noted the need to balance rights and responsibilities between people delivering and people receiving services and that we avoid differential impacts on people based on their household configurations when considering household mixing guidelines.
17. Cabinet met twice on 27 and 29 October and agreed that new rules must be accompanied by a change in behaviour (e.g. seeing fewer people, greater adherence to social distancing) if we are to succeed in suppressing the virus and keeping it at a manageable level (at or below R_t 1.2). Without a fundamental shift the way people mix with others in all areas, and without a more restrictive approach in other areas of society like schools or leisure, we will see a return to exponential growth. Time limited restrictions (whether local or national) do not solve this fundamental problem.
18. The approach which emerged from these discussions and which has informed Ministerial choices on the new Regulations can be summarised as follows:
 - that there should be as little social mixing as possible, in particular within people's houses
 - groups meeting in regulated, supervised settings and outdoors should be accommodated where possible to aid broader compliance
 - clear priority must be given to schools remaining open