Technical Advisory Cell: Summary Brief

9th October 2020

Top-line summary

- The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) estimate of the reproduction number (R_t) has fallen since last week, but there is still exponential growth of COVID-19 cases in Wales as Rt is still above one. Exponential growth of the epidemic occurs when large numbers of infections are accrued over a short period of time as a result of widespread infection.
- This may lead to hospital admissions rising across Wales unless further control measures are applied.
- Both intervening and not intervening has the potential to cause harm. For example, not intervening will cause direct harm arising from infection and harm to the NHS and other services. Intervening can cause both long-term and short-term indirect harm (e.g. economic harm, psychological harm, with particularly severe impacts on younger people).
- Measures are more likely to work if the public are engaged, understand and there is a clear message with achievable actions and goals.

The current situation in Wales

- For the first time in this wave of infections, the incidence for Wales is higher than 100 cases per 100,000 people and the total test positivity for Wales is 7.8%. All local authorities have seen more than 25 cases per 100k over the past week and have above 2.5% test positivity.
- We are continuing to monitor how the upwards trajectory in cases, hospital admissions and deaths might evolve in the coming weeks. If exponential growth were to continue for more than six weeks this could result in scenarios that exceed our reasonable worst case and planning scenarios.
- Incidence of COVID-19 has increased across all age groups, and is highest in those aged under 50. However an increasing proportion of cases is now seen in older age groups.

Potential actions to reduce the impact of the virus

- Non-pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) are actions, apart from getting vaccinated and taking medicine, that people and communities can take to help slow the spread of illnesses such as COVID-19.