

NR NR / Clare – Can someone clear the below press notice with the Minister ahead of the press conference please?

From: Name Redacted

Sent: 09 June 2020 11:36

[See recipients listed above]

Subject: RE: 1230 presser - urgent

A couple of changes from me highlighted.

From: Name Redacted

Sent: 09 June 2020 11:24

[See recipients listed above]

Subject: RE: 1230 presser - urgent

NR I've made some changes to the below. I'm not sure if the information highlighted is accurate, but I can't find a more user-friendly description – suggestions welcome!

Claire – shout if I can help with the script.

Thanks

Name Redacted

Three-layer face coverings recommended, but not mandatory, in certain situations in Wales

The Welsh Government is following updated advice from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and recommending people in Wales wear three-layer face coverings in situations where social distancing is not possible. ~~This advice will be adopted from Monday 15 June 2020, at the same time as proposed changes in England come into force.~~

The evidence remains clear that maintaining a 2 metre distance and good hand hygiene is the most effective way to protect yourself and others from contracting coronavirus, but the updated guidance from the WHO says three layer face coverings could help provide some control of the virus in specific circumstances.

This updated advice only applies to people who are not showing symptoms of coronavirus. People who are symptomatic must self-isolate for seven days and get a test, as set out in existing guidance. Unless the test shows a negative result, they must not go out during this time, even with a face covering or mask.

Health Minister Vaughan Gething said: "Washing your hands, avoiding touching your face and maintaining a 2 metre distance from others remain the best way of stopping the spread of the virus.

"On Friday, the WHO updated their guidance on face coverings, advising that they should be considered in settings where maintaining social distancing is difficult. However, to be crystal clear, wearing a face covering does not replace the need for social distancing or washing your hands regularly.

"Further scientific evidence is needed on the benefits to the wider public of wearing face coverings, but observational findings so far suggest that homemade or purchased three-layer face-coverings might reduce transmission from one person to another if made, worn, handled and disposed of properly.

"Therefore, on balance, we are recommending to the people of Wales that three-layer face-coverings should be used in situations where social distancing measures can be more difficult to achieve, for example, on public transport. We are not recommending their use outdoors.

"The wearing of face coverings will not be mandatory, but we will encourage people to do this for the benefit of themselves and others."

The Minister stressed that this advice only applies to people who are not showing symptoms of coronavirus, adding: "Anyone who has a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste must self-isolate for a minimum of seven days and get a test as quickly as possible. Unless the test shows a negative result, people must not go out during this time, even with a face covering or mask."

Notes

To provide any protection to others, face coverings need to be made, worn, handled and disposed of in a certain way.

The WHO recommends a minimum of three layers in a face covering, which should include:

- An inner layer of absorbent material, such as cotton
- A middle layer of non-woven material, such as polypropylene
- An outer layer of non-absorbent material, such as polyester or polyester-blend

More information on making your own face covering can be found here *****

From: Lee Waters (Ministerial) <Lee.Waters@gov.wales>

Sent: 09 June 2020 11:12

[See recipients listed above]

As raised at the meeting, the TAG paper will bring with it a huge number of queries and demands for us to take a policy position with really major implications, like provision of medical grade masks to vulnerable groups. Can we distil the announcement to a series of bullet points now and work on those urgently, and agree with MHSS that any questions beyond these (and specifically on the use of medical grade masks) will be pushed beyond today to the more detailed sectoral guidance, developed with stakeholders, and that the full TAG report will also be published once there is a clearer position on all the issues.

How about this:

**Following the change in advice from the WHO on face coverings at the end of last week, we have asked our Technical Advisory Group to look again at the position in Wales.*

**A homemade or purchased face covering might reduce the transmission of SARS-CoV2 from one person to another if made, worn, handled and disposed of properly. Scientific evidence is not robust on the benefits of face coverings, with mainly observational findings supporting the role in preventing transmission. It should be noted that this has not been extensively studied to date, and further studies are expected.*

**Face coverings should be considered when in settings where other control measures or other control methods for reducing exposure are not effective and other measures such as social distancing remain of critical importance and should not be relaxed when wearing a face covering.*

Following careful consideration, we have decided that we will, from Monday, strongly recommend to the public that face coverings should be used in situations where social distancing measures can be more difficult to achieve, for example public transport. This will **not be mandatory, but we will encourage people to do this for the benefit of themselves and others.*

Toby Mason

Cyfarwyddwr Cyfathrebu / Director of Communications
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