

Briefing to PHW Board

From: [NR] (Re087289) [NR]@wales.nhs.uk>
Sent: 31 January 2020 11:38
To: Quentin Sandifer (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter) <Quentin.Sandifer@wales.nhs.uk>
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PLEASE TREAT AS OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Dear all, we thought it would be helpful to provide an update on arrangements for planning and responding to the Wuhan novel coronavirus.

1 Global and UK Context

You may have seen that last night the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Wuhan novel coronavirus to be a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). This enables the WHO to more actively direct action and mobilise support internationally in order to minimise the spread with a particular focus on countries with weaker health systems.

Whilst this does not change the planning, preparedness and response arrangements that we have rapidly been putting in place in the organisation and

with WG and the wider NHS, it has resulted in the UK risk level being raised from low to **moderate**. Similarly, the four nation's Chief Medical Officers are meeting regularly, and again this morning, and we expect the case definition to change today. Currently this includes 'Wuhan City' as the geographic extent in the definition but this is likely to extend to 'Mainland China'. This will result in an increase in the number of people falling within the scope of the case definition and therefore requiring assessment.

Furthermore, the first two cases have now been confirmed in the UK in England and this was announced this morning.

2 Wales Arrangements

Together with Andrew, Giri, Robin and our health protection, microbiology and communications teams we have been working all hours to rapidly put in place robust arrangements in Wales. We are working closely with colleagues from Welsh Government, the wider NHS in Wales and UK colleagues. The team has been briefing the Local Resilience Fora coordinators regularly. It is agreed that, at the present time, this is a 'health led incident' and Public Health Wales, alongside Welsh Government, is leading the response.

We have been connecting closely with all NHS organisations in Wales with meetings throughout the week. This has confirmed first point of contact and communication arrangements 24/7. This morning we held a conference call for Chief Executives and various Medical Directors, Directors of Public Health and Directors of Nursing, in order to bring them up to date on the current position and ask if any further support is required for them. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales joined this call.

We continue to undertake testing of suspected cases in Wales, all of which have fortunately been negative to date.

3 Public Health Wales Arrangements

We continue to assess our resources and capacity to respond to the coronavirus outbreak and currently remain at 'enhanced' level of response. We are using our Pandemic Response Plan as the guide to planning for the Wales response to coronavirus, informed by epidemiological intelligence agreed with public health colleagues across the UK and internationally. This allows us to mobilise our own resources and support NHS organisations across Wales to meet our responsibilities 24/7.

We will continue to keep the Board up to date as appropriate.

Quentin Sandifer
Director of Public Health Services