

FM press conference – March 2, 2020

- Good morning and a slightly belated happy St David's Day.
- The first case of novel coronavirus – COVID-19 – was confirmed in Wales on Friday. As of this morning [MONDAY] there is one case in Wales and 36 confirmed cases in the UK.
 - The first confirmed case in Wales was a person who had returned from Northern Italy, where the virus is circulating.
 - In line with our planned response, the person is being treated at the Royal Free hospital in London, one of four specialist units set up to deal with cases of coronavirus in the UK.
 - Public Health Wales is continuing to work to identify people who may have been in contact with this first Welsh case.
- There are more than 88,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus in 62 countries around the world. [MONDAY data from WHO]

Preparations

- We have been working hard to prepare for arrival of novel coronavirus in Wales for many weeks.
 - We will continue to do all we can to detect cases early and isolate them to prevent any further spread.
 - Wales and the whole of the UK is well prepared for these types of incidents. We have implemented our planned response and we have robust infection control measures in place to protect public health.
- This morning I attended a COBRA meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister, to discuss the UK's preparations for coronavirus.
- The Health Minister has taken part in weekly meetings with the UK Government to prepare for novel coronavirus. Officials are involved in daily meetings with all four UK governments.
- We will hold a special Cabinet meeting on Wednesday to discuss cross-government preparations.
- The four UK chief medical officers are working to ensure consistent advice and support across the UK.
- The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has issued a series of public health alerts to NHS Wales about COVID-19 and has written to health boards about the need to set up community-based assessment and testing services away from hospital emergency departments.

- We want people to be tested away from hospital settings as far as possible.
 - We have a community testing model in place – 95% of the coronavirus tests which we have carried out to date (the overwhelming majority of which have been negative) have been carried out in community settings.
- The Chief Medical Officer has also written to all health boards about increasing capacity in the event people need to be admitted to Welsh hospitals for treatment.
- We have issued guidance to the NHS in relation to health and social care workers who have travelled to China and other areas affected by coronavirus and we have issued guidance to schools and other educational settings about coronavirus.

Advice to the public

- The most important piece of advice is to stay calm.
- If you have travelled to any of the affected areas or have concerns you are a close contact of a confirmed case, please do not go to your GP or emergency department.
 - If you develop flu like symptoms including a fever, a cough, or difficulty breathing immediately self-isolate, even if symptoms are minor and call 111 or NHS Direct Wales.
- Detailed advice for people returning from an area affected by novel coronavirus is available on the Public Health Wales website, which is being updated at 3pm daily.
- Everyone can help to reduce the spread of any respiratory virus, including coronavirus.
 - Remember to *catch it, bin it, kill it and wash your hands*.
- You can help protect yourself and others by always carrying tissues, and using them to catch coughs or sneezes.
- You should bin the tissue, and to kill the germs, wash hands with soap and water. This is the best way to slow the spread of most germs, including coronavirus.
- Thank you. I'm happy to take questions.