

1. Welcome and apologies

The Minister for Health and Social Services (MHSS) welcomed people to the meeting noting Welsh Government names and WLGA leaders in the room with him (Cllr Andrew Morgan Leader WLGA and Chris Llewellyn, Chief Executive WLGA) and set out how meeting would run.

Minister updated on the Cobra meeting which had just finished explaining that he had just briefed the Welsh press and that the PM would be briefing UK press imminently.

He stressed key messages:

- The UKG was formally moving from contain to delay phase.
- From tomorrow (Friday 13th) those with symptoms of new cough or temperature were asked to stay at home for 7 days as a precautionary measure to stop community spread.
- FCO advice would be that no overseas school trips should proceed – as this was FCO guidance it meant insurance should be able to be claimed. Minister for Education Kirsty Williams would make a statement coming same advice in Wales.
- Over 70s would be advised not to travel on cruise holidays.

There would be guidance and advice on Public Health Wales and Welsh Government websites. UK Gov would be setting out measures for access to payments for self employed.

MHSS explained this was the first stage. Other measures would be brought in as the medical and scientific advice confirmed it was appropriate. These would include family / household isolation - asking families of new symptoms to self-isolate. It might be necessary as some point to encourage people over 70 who were at much greater risk to stay at home for a much longer period time- potentially 3-4 months depending on success in suppressing spread. We were not at that point now.

Local Government staff would be affected by all this themselves, as well as in respect of the challenges of service delivery. The new advice would be a test of how well people responded and what the service challenges would be. Planning needed to be in place urgently.

The UKG was not suggesting the banning of mass gatherings. The epidemiological advice did not suggest this was needed at this stage. The Scottish Government was doing so – not because of any difference in view on the impact on transmission but in order to ensure the energy of public services and emergency services was not displaced. The Welsh party political conferences for Labour and Plaid Cymru were being cancelled. The rugby game on Saturday was (at this stage) due to proceed.

2. Update from Chief Scientific Advisor for Health

Rob Orford ran through the arrangements for scientific advice. SAGE met twice weekly and it was from this group's analysis that the reasonable worst case scenario was coming. This suggested that community transmission was taking place in the UK. Without behavioural changes then peak incidence was around 10-14 weeks away with peak demand for the NHS 2 weeks later. This was estimated to mean around 1.6m people in Wales would catch the disease. The virus disproportionately affected the older, those with other health conditions such as asthma. Demand for hospital beds would be outstripped many fold and demand for most serious intervention even more so. The challenge for the UK was to dampen and spread the curve but not so far that the peak then lengthened into the next winter flu season. This lengthening and dampening was what the behavioural interventions were intended to achieve.

3. Update from Reg Kilpatrick, WG Director of Local Government

Reg Kilpatrick outlined his role leading on resilience and emergencies. There was a high state of preparedness with ECCW operating and LRFS engaged. Information circulated to local government earlier in the week was the first we had been able to share and outlined both the reasonable worst case scenario and the shape of the emergency legislation being proposed by UK Government. The Bill would be published week commencing 16 March with royal assent anticipated by the end of the month. The legislation would provide for new temporary powers for Governments and local government. Authorities needed to recognise scale of impact and the challenge to continue to deliver services in that context. Planning by and with all partners needed to be in place including on handling excess deaths.

Open flow of info dialogue on how this could happen lots of people how best channel this

How do we work with you to avoid series of meetings

Looking at emergency measures, got a long day starting in ECCW -key thing info sent out on Monday, potential number of deaths, proposed provisions in bill, emergency services preparedness.

Bill announced formally next Tuesday

Issues – scale of impact on workforces and delivering services with a depleted workforce.

NHS – some incentive for people to be discharged but people will need support from LG through social care.

Planning with all local partners especially health service needs to be underway quickly if haven't started yet.

Planning for excess deaths need to be put in place – not had to exercise it before. Need to work with LG to manage this.

Need to work out how we best channel guidance and info to get to the right people as quickly as we can. How do we work with you so we don't create a whole series of meeting and share

4. Response / Questions from Local Government

Andrew Morgan

Bound by regulations on education and care homes

Issue with number of staff in care homes and delivering care packages, some with lessor need may have to forfeit care. Urgent work needed around regulations – in event of death could be resources for LA

Schools- may be running on reduced ratios or level of quals. Need to look at regulations

Access to procurement for hand sanitisers and barrier equipment. Need access to procurement channels urgently – some areas are running out and

Minister asked Albert Heaney to answer

VG – from govt point of view we recognise we have to relax some regulations, have already asked regulators to put note out with guidance from CCIW and ratios in schools

Know there is a lot of pressure to close schools but from science point there's not much point as kids will mix already in Easter holidays. Plus staff out to look after kids and the people asked to look after them may well be grandparents. Very clear advice not to close schools but guidance may change in the future. If we did it would be a request to close schools for a longer period of time.

Albert Heaney

Already set up intensive communication with social services lead, lead director from Powys,

Some of core duties can be stopped and covered by regulations
Social care easements will be put in place as the workforce will be impacted on so will have to divert workforce from other areas.
Conference call tomorrow morning with wider sector partners
WLGA are looking at redeployment of staff to help.

Q – critical time for peak so not to push into winter pressure. Helpful for councils to have an early sight of what the delay phase looks like so can

A – we are in the delay phase from today – part of point of this call to give some of those early measures. Useful to continue to make

Julie James - about to write out to not enforce regs re deliveries to supermarkets overnight

Comeback to Reg –

What we need to do in this situation is to delay with specifics, if LAs have specific problems like planning or environmental health useful to bring those to us. Policy departments are committed to be as flexible and supportive as we can. Also true that Ministers will want high levels of assuredness themselves.

Andrew Morgan – we are collecting data and will be able to share at the end

Anglesey – port of Holyhead – how are we going to work together on movement on port

A – don't have travel restrictions = concern at the moment is downturn in activity and economy. Make sure someone from economy team talks to them plus Pembrokeshire ports.

Anglesey – who will be in the port if we do have to preventive

A – don't think that is likely - in the bill as a possible. If a difference between us and mainland Europe.

Anglesey – it's the communication lines that need to be used.

Reg – have lines of comms re Brexit so same staff will be talking to relevant LAs

Blaenau Gwent – no comment

Bridgend – can we bring some mothballed older peoples homes back into use to free up places in hospitals – we want to fast track focus, need to consider don't want to go through registration process

A – understanding that CCIW will be flexible - useful if that is a way forward – a national conversation would be useful

Caerphilly – social care – care providers and homes in independent sector – financial health an issue as they act on edge of margins

A – need to work through challenge of budge does and doesn't mean. Need business to survive. Around what does budget announcements mean

Cardiff – sports events – can guidance be circulated in writing.
Homelessness – how we care for them

PPE – supply issues

Trading position of owned public transport - eg Cardiff bus will affect cash position

A – homelessness know it is at risk group will work with UKL govt on guidance

PPE – already announced stuff for GPs and pharmacies looking to do some roll out across social care. If have particular concern please give specifics for us to deal with will be helpful

Public transport – if there are rules within our gift to flex we will look at. Please let us know if rules prevent doing the right thing.

Carmarthenshire – what time will the foreign office give change on trips

PPE etc – difficult to get hold of. Much re-routed to NHS

Relaxation of regs – performance indicators and estyn audits will they be suspended

Financial support from welsh govt – what is it and timetables will they been relaxed

A – haven't been given a specific time.

Albert – PPE etc – raised today by directors of social services RCT - view is clear that it is essential that we have the type of things that preventive.

Two follow up meetings at 5 and 5.30 as its essential especially for care homes. Worth remembering we have NHS storage and equipment for pandemic flu

Reg – inspection and perf indicators CIW have already made clear that they will be taking a pragmatic view. CIW don't want to transmit virus themselves by inspections. Don't know about WAO yet haven't had a talk yet hope they replicate approach to Brexit, know approaching year end. On finance we haven't worked through the implications of yesterday's budget and we will be having further discussions

Andrew morgan – shared the briefing note with the minister – so don't talk about things on the briefing note. Update on this meeting that will come out will include tat on the briefing note.

Ceredigion – are there any issues regarding waste collections for people tested positive and in homes - how safe is their waste
People in communities will be helping people to shop – any guidance

A – waste question will answer as part of the note
Volunteers – will provide advice but need to be sensible stuff - most direct route of transmission is close direct contact and time length.

Denbighshire- clarity on PPE – what will be provided to LG not just in social care - what message are we sending to staff who work with public
A – PPE is for people in an at risk position – eg, social care setting. Can you confirm in briefing.

Philippa – no mention of provision for exams, how will we deal with that, exams plus course,
A – Chris L – being in touch with estyn etc - discussions are taking place, having to not at a point at making decision yet.

NPT – is it an intention to set up gold command
Reg – no use normal 3C coms structure used in Brexit. Each LA will have responsibility to provide services will work through local resilience forum
WG will do usual role of flow of communication.

VG - Julie want to say anything on performance. J
A – will talk at next partnership tag onto flooding meeting

Powys – large festivals coming up international etc, hay and Royal Welsh. When are we likely to escalate plus police and crime commissioner at end of may.
A – elections in briefing. Larger events comes back to judgement of large events vs science saying not effective response to disease issue is the use of emergency services staff been tied up. Will make decision in coming days and weeks. If we end up asking people to self isolated also an issue re people not being abler to attend. We don't have formal powers at the moment to close events can just encourage

Wrexham – first issue about tomorrow – very important info comes from a single source

Need to avoid duplication – now ECCW been established and emergency structure chaired by police in North Wales.

A – we are sticking to those sources. Public health agencies will be the places info will be shared from . PM will be a press conference
For new symptoms it will be 7 days

Pembrokeshire – about to submit huge amount of data to printers costs will be incurred- early decision useful. Timescale for amendments of rbill?

A – answer elections with briefing - the welsh govt isn't in control – uk decision. The briefing will set more detail – we will get some on Tuesday and bill will be out on Thursday. Aim to have UK wide leg passed before the end of march so in place before upswing

VoG - hand gel – been contacted by care homes that cant get hold of it – central purchasing by WG possible??? Plus prices have gone sky high. BBC is already putting stuff out already – need to check it is accuracy.

A – will check what is been reported on BBC, ITV . won't lose sight of issue with procurement

Torfaen – schools advise- needs communicating very clearly – it is sensible - increasing number of schools and parents panicked and the unintended consequences.

A – opp to get direct message to schools through education minister, . might need headline message about unintended consequences

Swansea – guidance on by elections – one in April and in Newport
A – no will issue if we have one

Conwy – when will the briefing be sent out. Wider democracy – mentions decision making needs more meat on the bone – how do we work through decision making if can't meet in person.

A – out tomorrow on briefing.

Decisions – some decisions makers will be in risk categories- will give thought and provide guidance.

Powys – excess deaths – looking for facility in the county, found a property – financial assistance from WG to secure it time critical as it will need to make necessary.

A – reg - take that offline

Flintshire – need some guidance on bills to extend powers to understand it. Electoral commission has confirmed stand down until autumn.

Gwynydd – testing is there any clarity on who should be testing and when.

A -CMOs have agreed to new approach to testing so more info will come out via PHW and PHE. Its about following advice not rocking up to testing facility.

Andrew morgan – can we do a joint statement from WG and WLGA to cover schools etc. Also a number of leaders have raised a lack of communication to elected politicians. Is there a way to find out before the media. When info goes out to other contacts – can we have summary info or chief execs to handle media.

A - Yes

TUC – can they see stuff as well re briefing and statements.

A – will talk re message to workforce. NHS partnership forum you are in room - we will make sure office is sighted on message.

Neil – priority testing for social workers and care staff. If there are staff going off for 7 days can we get them tested early too. Eg director of social services.

A – working through with PHW on that. Will make sure WLGA

One voice wales – info distributed through local reliance for a – can we share info with one voice wales to send onto community councils . last two days been inundated with questions from community councillors
A – yes.

5. Response / Questions from Fire and Rescue Service

6. Conclusion

Thanks for giving the time to meet. Talking more in next few weeks and months. May need to talk remotely. May be easier by video.

Discussion

Q – healthcare workers themselves – asking people to stay at home and people self isolating, what is situation for front line service, but have to self isolated as a family.

A – for people in essential services may test them earlier and allow them to go back to work. Lots of planning work re continuing operations.

Q – over 70s been asked to stay at home – is that a reality and when will be it rolled out

A – Ministers across UK will have to take a decision in next few weeks. Not a trivial thing as social isolation and loneliness

Q – community transmission – what did you say at the start

A – we think community transmission is starting to take place that is why moving from contain to delay

Q – advice issued – who will issue and what time.

A – advice on new cough or temp – from tomorrow, all ministers and chief medical officer agreed. Answered q in press brief.

On education department in English and Kirsty Williams will issue statement from tonight
Foreign and commonwealth advice will change
Older people- likely choice but not announced tomorrow.
UK gov will say something about cruise holiday not going ahead

Q – is that the only change from FCO going to change, cruise and school trips

A – no advice about other European countries changing. Send a note out of the meeting tomorrow so all info comes direct