Clare holiday update – JR

10th August 2020

Mass gatherings meeting with Rob Holt / NR

Mark wants to put responsibility on to event organisers. It was a bit muddled. We are still singling out weddings. Meeting tomorrow to discuss indoor households stuff – will be more useful I hope!

11am Frank / Rob meeting (but Fliss back in his place!)

- Outbreaks – no real update from the Maelor but the outbreak email from today shows a case in Cardiff and a case in Cwm Taf where people have both been to Tenby – I'm going to send an email because I'm a bit worried (aside from my personal worry) about this and the implications for local community relations….
- Face coverings – 'understand we are an outlier and pressure to mandate it but that really is your choice FM' - FA
  - School transport statement – Fliss - going to be a large paper from NERVTAG on school transport in next couple of weeks. Over 10/12 yrs of age – come closer to transmitting as adults. Likely to want to mandate masks on buses but issues of equity.
  - Fliss – face coverings as a whole, TAC – hotly contested. If face coverings are mandated now indoors while there is no outbreak then might need to do full lockdown if there is. Better to do local discretion if there are incidents on ALL indoors.
  - FM – have repeatedly argued not proportionate to use face coverings during low prevalence. Public completely mystified why we won't mandate face coverings in supermarkets. Also pressure from supermarkets themselves and TUs. Could we require supermarkets to display a notice 'WG positively recommends face coverings in crowded indoor places – please think about it before you go in….' Could consider – if we change to people meeting indoors this week – does a change to this give us a moment in public relations terms to counter-balance by mandating face coverings in supermarkets.
  - Frank – I would argue pubs close are more logical than face coverings in the scenario you suggest FM…. This is a one way street. Prevent and response plan – could use this once we have certain triggers – then you have a way out too. Either locally or nationally.
  - Fliss – could be that mandation would only apply where there is an incidence.
  - FM – difficult to explain. Struggled last week in relation to local lockdowns. What are the triggers? How do we explain this?
  - Fliss / Frank – triggers. No of cases, levels of transmission.
  - FM – notices to positively encourage in crowded public places.
- JBC – FM sent note that 4 CMOs on unanimity as well as the other part of the agreement on unanimity. Frank very comfortable with this. FM - seen weekly slide pack from the JBC / Jo Trott note (I haven't found this yet) – very difficult to see line of sight into the Preston / Blackburn responses that then happened.

- Frank – JBC are building an extraordinary analytical response that we are going to struggle to match. Wrexham would have appeared as number 2 on that list – why are you not doing in Wrexham what we are going to do in Blackburn? We knew the context was different. It would have been the wrong thing to do. Irrespective of what comes out of JBC, we are going to have to take our own responses. Can we deliver on this on our own? I don't think we can with the level of resources we currently have. Matching their billions against 2 people. Irrespective of JBC, we have to find a way of managing our own decisions in a rational way, otherwise we will be forced into a position because England are producing data.
- FM – my anxiety of JBC data appears to be creation of data but can't tell you what it means. Slides were very light on analytical capacity.
- Frank – CV consensus cell and then Response team – can provide you with the advice you need. JBC as it grows will take on PHE functions – we cannot build some of these ourselves. We will have to be part of this. Cautious engagement is I think the best course of action.
- FM – important point to pursue, PHE current arrangements are not disturbed by JBC. Doesn't address the point that what if PHE are aligned into JBC – need reassurance that the current arrangements follow.

Carys' note of the meeting says:

Frank/Fliss – further to your discussion with the FM just now, the following approach to face coverings was agreed:

- *we will move to make face coverings mandatory when this is necessary as part of a planned response to an incident or outbreak, responding to the triggers to be set out in the draft local outbreaks document (eg cases rise above 50 per 100k, the positivity rates exceeds 5% and there is a growth in cases unrelated to specific incidents)*
- *so mandation will be linked to specific conditions, and will be lifted when those conditions ease*
- *the position on supermarkets should continue as now – that we recommend wearing face coverings in crowded settings where social distancing is difficult.* **NR** *the FM would be grateful for advice on how we can require supermarkets to displays signage designed by us. Toby- one suggestion is that we present as a dial with 3 settings: not needed/recommended/mandatory, to dispel the impression that we are anti face coverings – our position is that we support their use when conditions necessitate.*

Tom – please can you incorporate the first 2 bullets into the revised local outbreaks document.

BAWSO – letter of complaint from them to FM / DM&CW – relates to the earlier issues we discussed. Kate following up.

Tom – Schools

- Schools return (including school transport)
- Exams
- HE

Think this is all ok ish and have run out of steam to type.

Helen & NR – both very stressed about the problems with nobody taking responsibility for anything. I've fixed up to talk to Simon with them both on Wednesday. – update – there is an issue relating to the public health team I need to pick up with you when you are back.

The most ridiculous thing that has happened today is an email thread about the local lockdowns. We aren't supposed to call them lockdown. There are a million emails about 'containment' and 'protection zones'. This is the title they have come up with at the moment (it won't be the title when you get back! – if it is shoot me now!)

Enhanced Health Protection Area

Nothing on the health side of significance. Andrew G sent us an email with some data in it about people in ICU. It is positive.

I have also heard nothing about anything to do with the border regs but Carys was chasing for me and I'll ask again tomorrow!

11th August

Regulation changes. Meeting this am, agreed:

- Extended households: to expand the scope to include up to four households as part of a single exclusive extended household. This will not include allowing for the dissolution of existing extended households and the reformation of a new extended household once 2 weeks have elapsed. This will take effect from 22 August
- Meeting indoors socially distanced: this will not be implemented at the current time
- Wedding receptions and funerals: to allow for a socially distanced meal of up to 30 people indoors if linked to a ceremony. To also take effect on 22 August
- Regulations will be drafted this week to require the collection of contact details for hospitality or other high-risk settings so not doing so is an offence.
- Consideration to be given to reinforcing communications around current regulations so people are clear of their responsibilities (for example, not meeting another household in a pub or restaurant).

Local lockdown – ridiculous conversation ongoing about what to call these. Local Enhanced Protection Areas (LEPA) current officials fave!

JJ press conference – appears to have gone fine.

TTP meeting
New ways of publishing data. Data being published tomorrow in the new format dating back to 22nd June. Mark expressed concerns that there had been no policy conversation about doing the data retrospectively. (I think this refers to the removing care homes, etc but have to admit I'm not quite sure).

NHSX app – not called this any more. Called something else. Ifan updated on the agreement and where all going. All ok. Quite a lot of data embedded including postcode risk alert level and 'someone' 'we' designate as low / medium / high – how does this align with our own escalation procedures.

All postcodes start as 'low'. At the top of the screen all the time so low is the baseline.
Scan at venues (barcode) but no GPS on the app. In time, may be an alert level at locations so you could travel from Cardiff to Bridgend and you will get told when you scan to enter a place that the alert level is higher.

Jo-ann - Backward tracing – been looking at options. Could give us a big return if we can find some information on where outbreaks have originated. Richard S talked about pilot.
Rep I – testing of index contacts on day 1 and day 7 – theory being you can contact trace from earlier if positive cases are identified earlier. NI are following suit.
England & Scotland considering this. Concerns if you test at day 7 and negative then people won't isolate until day 14. We have expressed interest in the pilot.

Implications on number of tests. Mark asked about learning from RoI and whether there was evidence of reward from effort…. Frank been involved at CMO level.

Mark followed up VG's question about variability of performance between LA Jeremy – we'll return to this when VG back. Mark – be useful to see this so that we can help those 'under-performers' if there turn out to be some consistently.

Gordon Brown call – was lovely (generally about Scottish Labour and what we can do to help) but he said how well Mark had done and at the end said 'we are very proud of you!' which was very nice!

School transport & updated Schools in September guidance published today. Says no face coverings on school buses unless a public bus.

Health stuff – I appear to have cleared an MA on VG's behalf – one on community pharmacy (VG 09238) (which appeared to relate to a WS from 16th June and some WQs / press lines. Nothing (I hope) of significance! I appear to also have asked for a note for VG and you on paying / contributing to NHS staff funeral costs. Janet F-S has written back on the petitions committee and they have offered one so I said yes! Letter to Mick G and Chris J on of 'A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care'. I have asked a question of NR about whether this has any read across to Social Care Forum (sorry, don't understand this stuff). Otherwise, I've said good to go. Was a bit nervous about it as it appears to be a grumpy letter and I didn't know if it needed to be grumpier!!!?
MA 2459 on uplift for optometrists is waiting for you for when you get back (thankfully!)

I left the office about 4pm and have no idea what happened with emails after that!

£500 / veterans – remind me to talk about this – it will make you want to cry!

12 August

Exams. Sighing. About to join a 9.30am with Kirsty to discuss what to do. Am going to type straight into here so although you may not need or want to know what is going on, at least I will have a record!

England have shifted. NI apparently doing something similar with regard to mocks. Gavin Williamson rang Kirsty this morning after the announcement.

How do we protect Welsh students (UK UCAS) / making sure fair for students / don't throw WJEC / Quals Wales

4 options:

i) Fold now
ii) Stick it out – our system fairer
iii) Enhanced appeals process. Use of previous school data in the standardisation process.
iv) Issuing 2 grades. Standardised grade and schools grade. Carry two grades forward – down to user / FE / employer / UCAS. (maintain standards for the longer term)

Kirsty – wouldn't Welsh students be at a disadvantage with dual grading?

What does an enhanced appeals process look like? Not mentioning mocks or choose between predicted or mock grades.
2 avenues: one appeal looking at individual / or school?

42% of A Level students downgraded!
Nothing in the results that would suggest

In Scotland calculated results, the attainment gap has closed but more 'downgrading'

Attainment gap has changed in Wales, but not statistically significant. CAG / FSM – adjustment % is the same.

Scotland – problem with teachers judgements.

Rules around telling regulator to do something else?

Universities had the results already. Same as England. Put something into appeals process – same as England. Making appeals free (currently £8)

KW / MD conversation – bare minimum – free and same appeals system as England and NI.
MD – guarantee that nobody will get less than their AS results?
-defending integrity of the system important in the long run.
-can't have Welsh students disadvantaged.
-November resits in England – all subjects or just core?

Less likely to have been downgraded if from an FE college. More likely to be have downgraded if you are FSM but marginal. BUT, MORE likely to have been upgrade if you are FSM but these are marginal. FE / school

UPDATE: you will have seen we have gone with AS levels as a backstop. Don't know how long it will hold.

To see this…:

From: *PS FirstMinister <PS.FirstMinister@gov.wales>*
Sent: *12 August 2020 10:53*
To: *PS Deputy Minister Health & Social Services <PSDMHSS@gov.wales>; Heaney, Albert (HSS - Social Services & Integration) <Albert.Heaney@gov.wales>*
Cc: *PS FirstMinister <PS.FirstMinister@gov.wales>; Street, Andrea (HSS - Social Services & Integration) <Andrea.Street@gov.wales>;* Name Redacted *n (HSSG - Specialist Policy Advisor)* Name Redacted *@gov.wales>;* Name Redacted *(OFM - Special Adviser)* Name Redacted *@gov.wales>; Runeckles, Jane (OFM - Special Adviser) <Jane.Runeckles@gov.wales>*
Subject: *RE: Care Home Action Plan letter and written statement*

Ruth, Albert,

The First Minister has noted this Written Statement and was struck by the number of aspects of the Plan which are still in development. It seems to him that we need this plan in place early in the autumn, if it is to have the impact we need.

He has therefore asked for an indication of the timescales against which the actions in the different sections here are expected to come to fruition. When do we expect all these to culminate in the production of the Winter Plan itself?

Grateful if you could provide a note with further information and timescales please.

Many Thanks,

Name Redacted

And this on the issue I mentioned yesterday:

From: Name Redacted *(OFM - Special Adviser)* Name Redacted *@gov.wales>*
Sent: *12 August 2020 10:06*
To: *Runeckles, Jane (OFM - Special Adviser) <Jane.Runeckles@gov.wales>; PS Minister Health & Social Services <PSMHSS@gov.wales>*
Subject: *RE: Further Advice to supplement MA/VG/0273/20 A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care' – progressing implementation*

Jane I think this is fine, don't think this Board will injure anything in the forum, the latter is largely about terms and conditions, the former is much more about training and accreditation and joint standards and competences. There may come a time when the board may wish to comment on say job and person specifications or be requested by Forum to undertake such tasks but this is all a long way off I think. I think it can proceed if you are happy. A.

Covid – outbreak report
Am getting very worried about increasing cases all over the place but couple of cases linked to Tenby in Cardiff & Cwm Taf. Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion have imported cases too…. Mmmmm

Update on the Welsh Government initiatives which have been put in place to support the economically vulnerable impacted by Covid-19 – email from NR at 17.04 – I haven't read it yet but feels like we should be aware.

Also this paper which Mark has asked to talk to Rob and Frank about next week.
Risk factors for outbreaks of COVID-19 in care homes following hospital discharge: a national cohort analysis

Is on email from PSSpecialAdvisers at 13.45 today although did come up to us from somewhere else (maybe Andrew G) on Monday and I forgot!

13th August

Headlines on A Levels don't feel as bad as they could / should have done. Let's see what the day brings!

I've caused chaos with a response to C4 on beauty guidance and work on the face. There are inconsistencies in the guidance. Sighing. Following a number of

This week we appear to be changing weddings and going to 4 households indoors (from 22nd Aug). Also adding a requirement for the collection of data by businesses. On next three weeks – Frank basically just said we have no headroom left. Mark is exploring pilots on outdoor live events. So no change for 20th Aug because of schools resuming. Use the 3 weeks to explore with sectors on pilots and mitigation measures that would need to be put in place.

Health – MA VG253620 just came up from NR (12.09) which is the draft response to the HSSS Committee report. I haven't looked at it.

Download stuff: Think I found the WQ you were thinking of when we were talking before:

WQ80127 asked:

"Will the Welsh Government publish the evidence on which it based its decision to cease community testing and contact tracing for the coronavirus on 12 March 2020?"

We responded:

"On the 12 March, based on advice from the four UK CMOs, a move from contain to delay was announced by Government. This was a four nations decision agreed at COBR(M) and aligned with the UK COVID-19 Action Plan.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869827/Coronavirus_action_plan_-_a_guide_to_what_you_can_expect_across_the_UK.pdf "

This was in a letter I have cleared today on the back of WQ 80326 which is in your inbox. J

Local Lockdowns

Meeting on the updated plan. Think it is there now apart from what we call the bloody thing. Mark favoured Coronavirus Containment Plan (and NR Coronavirus Containment Areas for the law) but some push back that the police think of kettling. Anyway, the conclusion was that a final version will be prepared for VG to see on Monday. Looks like Kirsty is now doing the press conf on Tuesday (dependent upon handling of GCSEs being sorted) so we may do something with VG or Frank later in the week. Vaughan can't do the press conference as he is doing some PHW / WHO conference…..

And this is useful to see too…

Here's a link to what UKG has published so far on action cards which I mentioned at the preparedness group this morning. Interestingly, they are being branded as part of the UKG 'early outbreak response'. We/ Simon/ Liz etc need to think about how to approach this consistently across WG – it seems to me that policy leads could build on what UKG has done but tailor for Wales - but for now it might be worth sending the link round to colleagues at the bird table, simply for info and to get people thinking. Perhaps we could pick up at the next bird table?

Thanks

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reporting-outbreaks-of-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-early-outbreak-management

BTW – we are publishing the TAG paper on face coverings tomorrow.

Travel regs – meeting been postponed until tomorrow – Boris doing it. As you know (because you rang me!) France has been on and off and maybe on again.

14th August

Exams stuff

So, woken up to Keir S calling for A levels to be on CAGs in England and (sighing again) the UK Party, having promised me they would tell us if they did – haven't. I have meeting with Kirsty and Qualifications Wales at 10am….

Meeting with Quals Wales
A Levels – egs of universities not using AS levels. – Huw Morris going to speak to Ucas
Appeals – progression rate between AS and A2 – additional grounds for appeal.
Mock appeals in England, seen critieria. Could do something similar in Wales.
Concern of use of word 'mock' – 'robust internal assessment'. Concern = becomes slippery slope to CAG by the back down.
AS Levels – not going to form part of the grade next year. But CAG form part of reference? This is going to be a big issue I think. They are proposing to decouple the AS from the A level but Mark thinks (I agree) that it should be student choice as to whether to decouple or not….
GCSE – anticipate overall grade inflation but when it comes to individual centres we are going to have some real problems.
Options (are complicated). Mock system / triple lock option – effectively reverts to CAG and overwhelms the appeals process.
Got concerns about CAGs / rely on mocks – problematic in terms of standards…..
Model 1 for science and English literature – emphasis on prior attainment.
One grade below CAG?
Policy response that says every college / sixth form can offer a place to every student? 94% guaranteed place anyway. FM keen on this so think we will be able to guarantee a place to 100%.

GROUP MEETING ON MONDAY AT 4PM on this.

Update – second meeting at 4pm.
Basically shifting to CAGs for GCSEs. Complicated and won't be saying that out loud.
Engl / W 1st Lang / Numeracy – amend model to get best outcomes for schools – no worse than 2019 outcome
Eng Lit / Welsh Lit / Welsh 2nd Lang / Science / History / RE / ICT – not fall behind the grade of anything you have already sat. Unit 1 = B, then get a B. Capped at the CAG – wouldn't go above the CAG
Rest of subjects – can't do anything about these. Then have to go through appeals process – wide open – basically result in the CAGs.
Effectively take us to Eng / NI process.

This is a car crash. I can't help thinking going to CAGs

I have just (9.08am) copied an email to you and Kate following the ministerial call yesterday where Andrew Goodall has responded to a point Jane Hutt raised yesterday about disabled people being charged by GPs for assessments about

exemptions to wearing face coverings. Andrew is obviously right but I fear this might rumble.

The **France** stuff obviously happened last night. Think its fine.

Local Lockdown plan – going to do a comms call at 9am on Monday on this so we can decide what to call it. Thinking we will publish on Wednesday with Vaughan so need some time in his diary to do it – obviously subject to him being happy on Monday.

Email from Andy on £500

From: Name Redacted *OFM - Special Adviser;* Name Redacted *@gov.wales>*

Sent: *14 August 2020 10:00*

To: *Julie Morgan (Ministerial) <Julie.Morgan@gov.wales>; Vaughan Gething (Ministerial) <Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales>*

Cc: *Jenkins, Clare (OFM - Special Adviser) <Clare.Jenkins010@gov.wales>; Runeckles, Jane (OFM - Special Adviser) <Jane.Runeckles@gov.wales>; Griffiths, Paul (OFM - Special Adviser)* Name Redacted *@gov.wales>; Bevan, Alex (OFM - Special Adviser) <Alex.Bevan@gov.wales>*

Subject: *£500 payment for care workers...*

Dear Julie and Vaughan,

A quick update on the £500 process. The payments are now moving out and will continue over this month and the next two months but we cannot be certain yet when all finalised. We ran in to something of a glitch recently with a letter from Andrew Morgan (I think you will have had sight by now) setting out objections on behalf of WLGA/local authority treasurers to offsetting (in the payments) deductions for council tax where appropriate. Essentially, WLGA's John Roe and LA treasurers consider the task administratively onerous and expensive. I have spoken to Andrew Morgan and to Chris Llewellyn in the last two weeks about finding a solution that will let the recipients retain as much of the £500 as possible. They are of course sympathetic to that aim. I have since been informed by Chris that WLGA (via their treasurer contacts) have arrived at a figure of around £430,000 that would be needed by LAs to cover the costs of administration. This seems quite steep to me and our officials (including our local government finance colleagues) are now in discussion with WLGA to understand the calculations beneath the £430k and to develop options asap.

So this issue is going to run for another week at least. It isn't holding up progress towards the payments, but we do need to round it off as quickly as possible. NR *(leading on this) doesn't think it's worth formally putting this matter on the agenda for next week's Finance Sub Group meeting (Wednesday 11am) as discussions are early and ongoing, but I think it would be useful if JM/VG you could say at the meeting in amongst other business that this is an important issue that we need to bottom out and quickly find a resolution. Hope that makes sense, am on leave next two weeks but can be contacted by phone if needed.*

Best, Andy.

There is an email from me at 13.12 copying you into a query from Name from Mick A's office that I have found (through the private office) the right official - Name Name I know they want an urgent answer but they aren't going to get it today and I'm afraid you will need to pick this up. Don't ask me what it is about!

Lots of toing and froing about the regulation change to require data collection and which businesses are covered by it. Can discuss if required.

This MA MA/JM/2517/20 Agreement of funding to support implementation and stabilisation/reconstruction activity in social care 2020-21. Has come up from Anthony Jordan at 13.15. I'm not going to look at it!

Irrelevant & Sensitive don't need clearing until 19th Aug. I'm not going to do them as they are on mental health and I think you should look at them.

Testing announcement – Tuesday?