

Covid-19 Intelligence Cell (CIC)

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Welsh Government's surveillance approach for COVID-19 is brought together through the Covid-19 Intelligence Cell (CIC), which includes membership from across the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales (PHW). The purpose of the CIC is to act as a single, authoritative source of situational awareness for COVID-19, including all associated Variants of Concern, and the introduction of new tests and vaccinations across Wales. It draws on national and local intelligence from, amongst others:

- PHW including the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in PHW
- Data and intelligence from public health professionals about the local or regional context, including Directors of Public Protection and Directors of Public Health
- Data and intelligence, including information from Incident Management Teams and Outbreak Control Teams, from the Covid Intelligence Group (CIG)¹
- Data from our TTP systems, including on testing and contact tracing
- Expertise from Virology in Public Health Wales as required
- The Welsh Government's Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Technical Advisory Cell and Knowledge and Analytical Services.
- Cross UK data and intelligence, including assessment of risk in context of international travel to the UK, from the UKHSA (previously the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC))

The CIC also reviews the national Situation, Background, Assessment Recommendation (SBAR) for COVID-19 to get a better understanding of local transmission and the effectiveness of any practical measures applied. The SBAR is intended as a robust framework that allows the regional Incident Management Teams (IMT) to systematically provide a summary of the situational awareness findings from a local perspective. The SBARs offer rich qualitative and epidemiological information that include a summary of cases, clusters, outbreaks and trends in a range of sectors. CIC does not replace the statutory functions of Public Health Wales nor does it make decisions on NHS capacity.

2. Priorities

CIC will:

¹ The Covid Intelligence Group (CIG) is a biweekly/weekly meeting with Consultants in Communicable Diseases, PHW epidemiologists, and relevant Welsh Government officials. Frequency is dependent on public demand. The CIG provides a forum to receive and discuss intelligence in a timely manner from regional CCDCs which provides an insight into local transmission and the effectiveness of any practical measures. This forum is also used to discuss unexplained spikes in infection and consider the practicalities and potential effectiveness of future control measures. This output is fed into CIC via the CIG co-chairs.

- Act as an authoritative source of situational awareness of transmission and provide Welsh Government with a comprehensive overview of the incidence of COVID-19 across Wales;
- deliver timely and accurate outputs, including recommendations to HPAG OSG; - with the least duplication of effort;
- review the alert level methodology and balanced scorecard as needed, to reflect a range of additional measures and influencers including (but not limited to) the introduction of new tests and vaccinations; the implications of new variants; the work of PHW's genomics cell; and data on a range of settings including education, workplace, care homes etc.;
- produce an assessment of alert levels as requested, including recommendations with regard to movement between levels, ensuring that any such recommendations are consistent with the intelligence;
- where appropriate, work closely with UKHSA including the devolved administrations, in its consideration of local, national and international evidence and intelligence;
- Review the contents of the Covid Situation Report (CSR) and commend the final version to HPAG OSG

3. Reporting

CIC provides information, updates and/or recommendations on action required to relevant policy leads, to the HPAG-OSG and IMTs as appropriate.

4 Information Access and Sharing

Information shared with and arising from CIC should be treated as official-sensitive and should not be shared without the approval of the CIC co-chairs.

Information used by CIC will be held in the Welsh Government electronic file system and access will be managed in accordance with Welsh Government rules.

5 Arrangements for Meetings

The Chairing of CIC will be jointly undertaken by the co-chairs of TAG and the head of the UKHSA liaison team.

5.1 Venue

Remote-access via Microsoft Teams is the standard virtual meeting tool for this group.

5.2 Frequency of Meetings

The CIC will meet twice a week, usually on Tuesday and Thursday, and meeting frequency will be kept under review by the CIC and may change.

Where urgent business is required to be conducted between meetings, the Chair will arrange for members' views to be sought by email and the outcome will be reported to the next meeting of the CIC.

5.3 Agenda Items

The co-chairs will agree the final agenda for each meeting of the TAG. Any attendee may ask for an item or paper to be included on the agenda.

5.4 Circulation of Papers

The secretariat function will be undertaken by the HSS Public Health function.

Agendas, supporting papers and minutes/action lists of the previous meeting will be circulated to attendees as soon as is practicably possible.

Any actions for non-CIC members will be included in the action log and shared with policy leads as appropriate. The Secretariat will be responsible for ensuring all actions are monitored and closed down upon completion.

5.5 Membership

Membership of CIC is by invitation of the co-chairs in line with the purpose of the group and will be supplemented by subject specific experts or policy officials in line with agenda items or areas of discussion – such as vaccines, education, prisons etc.

Standing Members	
Dr Rob Orford / Fliss Bennée	Co-Chairs
Jo Trott	Head of Data Analytics and Surveillance (DAS) (Liaison) Team
Dr Giri Shankar	Incident Director, PHW
Dr Chris Jones	Deputy Chief Medical Officer, WG
Name Redacted	Consultant Epidemiologist, WG
Dr Huw Brunt	Chief Environmental Public Health Officer, WG
Dr Marion Lyons	Senior Medical Officer for Communicable Diseases, Healthcare Associated Infections & Antimicrobial Resistance.
Name Redacted	Senior Environmental Health Advisor for Covid-19, WG
Peter Jones	Deputy Director - Public Health Protection, WG
Dr Heather Payne	Senior Medical Officer, Maternal and Child Health Protection, WG
Craig Solomon	Head of Modelling & Statistics, TAC
Andrew Sallows	Delivery Programme Director, Health and Social Services, WG
NR	Covid-19 Advisor, TAC
Stephanie Howarth	Chief Statistician, Knowledge and Analytical Services, WG
Tom Smithson	Deputy Director, Covid-19 Restart, 21 Day Review
Liz Lalley	Deputy Director, Recovery
NR	Assistant Director, Contact Tracing, Test, Trace, Protect
Ffion Thomas	Deputy Director, Civil Contingencies
Name Redacted	Secretariat

Members Invited As Agenda Requires	
Elin Gwynedd	Deputy Director, Vaccines Team
Andrea Street	Deputy Director, Improvement, Social Services & Integration, WG
Ruth Conway/ Name Redacted	Deputy Director, Support for Learners Division, WG

Karin Phillips	Deputy Director, Community Safety
Jo-Anne Daniels	TTP
Claire Rowlands	Interim Director, Vaccines
Name Redacted	PHW Prisons Lead

5.6 Observers

Welsh Government officials may be invited to observe where relevant, at the discretion of the co-chairs.

5.7 Attendance

Other than in exceptional circumstances, all of the Cell should endeavour to attend all meetings.

Where members of the CIC are unable to attend a meeting they may nominate a deputy to the Co-chairs, to attend on their behalf. Deputies will be assumed to have the full delegated authority of the member they represent.

5.8 Withdrawal of individuals in attendance

At the discretion of the co-chairs, any or all individuals in attendance at a meeting of the CIC (i.e. observers) may be asked to withdraw from parts of the meeting in order to facilitate full and frank discussion.

5.9 Conduct of urgent business

Where urgent business is required to be conducted between meetings, the co-chairs will arrange for attendees views to be sought by email and the outcome will be reported to the next meeting of the CIC.

5.10 Decision making and escalation

CIC will seek to reach decisions on recommendations by consensus and therefore requires a minimum number of attendees to be available to contribute to this process. In all cases the quorum required for decision making is 50% of the group's members.

Where consensus is not reached, this will be highlighted in the relevant report or minute.

5.11 Declarations of Interest

Members of CIC will need to declare interests and that a register of interests is held by the secretariat and updated periodically.