

Welsh Government: COVID-19 Technical Advisory Cell - Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. Overview

Welsh Government has identified a need to ensure that scientific and technical information and advice arising from the UK Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE)¹⁻³ for COVID-19 is discussed and interpreted for Welsh Government and Welsh Ministers in order to:

- Interpret SAGE outputs into a Welsh context
- Help inform NHS and Social Care planning guidance
- To relay relevant information and questions from Welsh Government to SAGE
- Ensure Welsh Government and Public Health Wales have timely access to the most up-to-date scientific and technical information related to the outbreak.

The Welsh Government Technical Advisory Cell (TAC) will not:

- Interfere with extant functions of Strategic Coordination groups (SCG) or local Scientific Technical Advisory Cells (STACs)
- Interfere with or replace statutory functions of Public Health Wales
- Use technical or scientific information that has not been agreed or discussed by SAGE, unless this has a specific Welsh context

The Technical Advisory Cell will be recognised within the Emergency operating function of Welsh Government in providing advice for policy makers.

The priorities of SAGE are:

- Detection and monitoring of the outbreak as effectively as possible
- Understand effective actions to help contain a cluster
- Understand measure and alter the shape of a UK epidemic
- Model UK epidemic and identify key numbers for NHS Planning
- Understand risk factors around demographics, geographies and vulnerable groups (e.g. age)
- Generate Behavioural Science insights for policy makers
- Ensure NHS trials key interventions
- Consider emerging therapeutic, diagnostic and other opportunities

The Welsh Government Technical Advisory Cell will seek to interpret SAGE/COBR and relevant PHE/NHS or supporting SPI group outputs into a Welsh context.

2. TAC Members

- Rob Orford – Chair, Welsh Government (CSA-H))
- Andrew Jones – Public Health Wales
- Robin Howe - Public Health Wales
- Giri Shankar - Public Health Wales

- **Name Redacted** - Public Health Wales
- Heather Payne – Welsh Government (PH)
- Chrishan Kamalan - Welsh Government (HP)
- **Name Redacted** Secretariat, Welsh Government (HAD)
- **Name Redacted** – Welsh Government (KAS)
- Respiratory Health Experts x2
- NHS Planner
- Office of Chief Scientist – Welsh Government

3. Lines of Reporting

TAC will report into the H&SSG COVID 19 Planning and Response Group and will be accountable to CMO.

4. Information Access and Sharing

Information arising from SAGE is official sensitive and should not be shared outside of these structures. Information used by TAC that has not been approved by COBR will be held in a Welsh Government file system that is only accessible by member of TAC (see above).

5. Arrangements for Meetings

5.1 Venue

Welsh Government ECCW or Public Health Wales Capitol Quarter.

5.2 Frequency of Meetings

Aligned with SAGE Meetings (currently Tuesday and Thursdays) and Wednesday morning.

5.3 Agenda Items

The Chair will agree the final agenda for each meeting of the TAC. All members may ask for an item or paper to be included on the agenda.

5.4 Circulation of Papers

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

Minutes and actions of the most recent meeting will also be circulated as soon as is practicably possible after the meeting.

5.5 Attendance

Other than in exceptional circumstances, all members of the Group should endeavour to attend all meetings of the group.

5.6 Deputies

Whilst members must make every effort to attend, deputies will be allowed. Deputies will be assumed to have the full delegated authority of the member they represent.

5.7 Withdrawal of individuals in attendance

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

5.8 Conduct of urgent business

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 TAC.

5.9 Decision making and escalation

TAC will seek to reach decisions by consensus. Failure to reach consensus will require an escalation process to be triggered so that a decision can be reached.

For further information contact: HSSG.TAC@gov.wales

References

1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/80087/sage-guidance.pdf
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage>
3. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61252/the2009influenzapandemic-review.pdf