

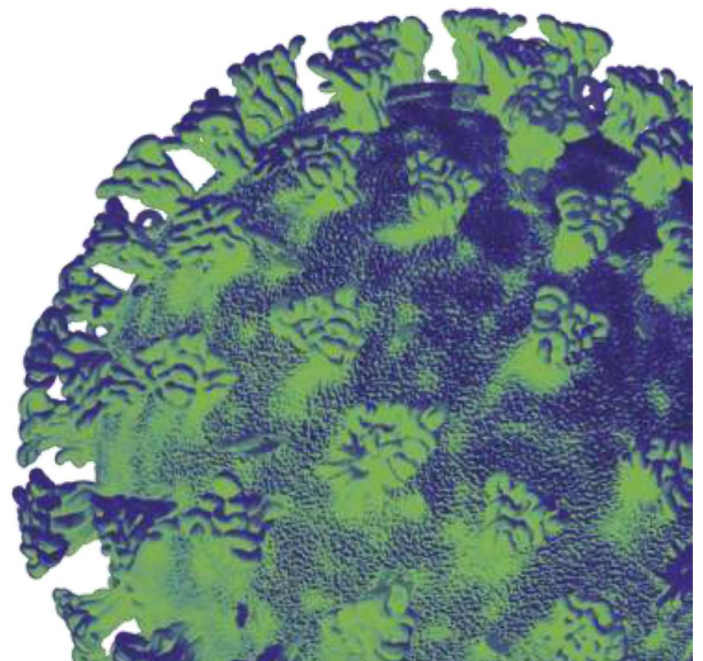
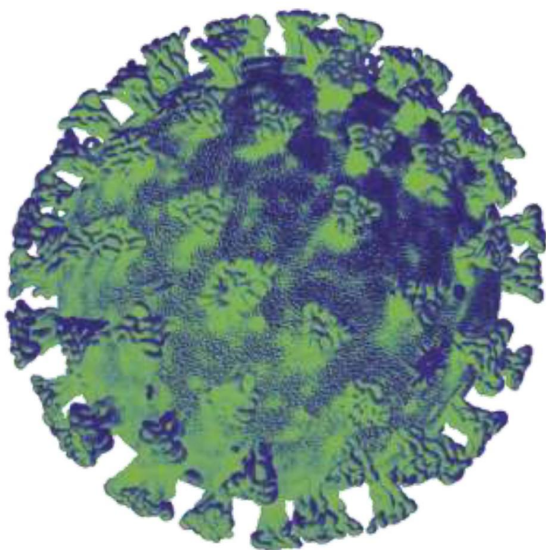
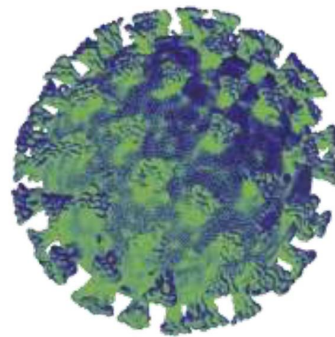


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Technical Advisory Cell

Summary of advice

11th September 2020



Technical Advisory Cell: Summary Brief

11th September 2020

Top-line summary

- The pattern of increasing cases is similar to the situation in February. Action should be taken to prevent significant harm arising from Covid-19 or another full lockdown.
- While the R number for Wales is estimated by SAGE to be between 0.7 and 1.0, we believe the current R number is higher than this suggests.
- Results from the Office for National Statistics infection study show that for the week 30th August to 5th September, an estimated 0.04% of the community population in Wales had COVID-19. This equates to approximately 1 person in every 2,600, or a total of 1,200 people during this time. Care should be taken when interpreting these figures due to low sample sizes.
- The number of lab confirmed COVID-19 episodes has increased nationally compared to the previous week.
- Age-group specific incidence is now highest in those aged 30-49 years and younger than 30 years.
- Recent cases have included travellers returning from countries outside the UK and also local transmission in work places and social networks. Activity in schools has recently been noted.
- The main foci of recent activity have been in Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf, although increasing trends are noted in other local authorities.
- Papers from SAGE considered by the Technical Advisory Cell and Group are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19#meeting-minutes-and-supporting-papers>.
- A consensus statement on the testing of travellers returning to Wales from areas of high prevalence was published this week. Papers published by the Technical Advisory Group are available here: <https://gov.wales/advice-coronavirus-technical-advisory-cell#Subjectspecificreports>.

Growth Rate

- The current growth rate is likely to be positive. By calculation it is estimated to be between -0.05 and 0.04. There is significant uncertainty around the actual growth rate due to minimal numbers of cases in hospital. Care should be taken when interpreting the growth rate and reproduction number of Wales as it is subject to uncertainty.

Reproduction number

- While the R number for Wales is estimated by SAGE to be between 0.7 and 1.0, this estimate does not take into account the latest case data. We know cases are increasing in Wales and the true R number is likely to be higher than this.
- A consistent R_t value below 1 will lead to a reduction in cases and hospitalisations, however a consistent R_t value above 1 will lead to an increase in cases and hospitalisations. As the number of cases falls, the impact of over-dispersion events may increase where instances of the virus being spread to several people in a short space of time may lead to fluctuations in the number of cases.
- There is evidence of small variations in R_t between the different nations of the UK. There is, however, greater uncertainty in the estimates for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland partly due to the smaller numbers of cases and deaths compared to England.
- Any changes in transmission that may have occurred in the past two to three weeks will not yet be reflected in clinical data, nor therefore in current estimates of R_t .
- There are two settings which are particularly relevant to the current situation: urban and rural areas, where the epidemic is spreading differently. The number of recent cases associated with international travel may have been significant in increasing the infection in Wales.

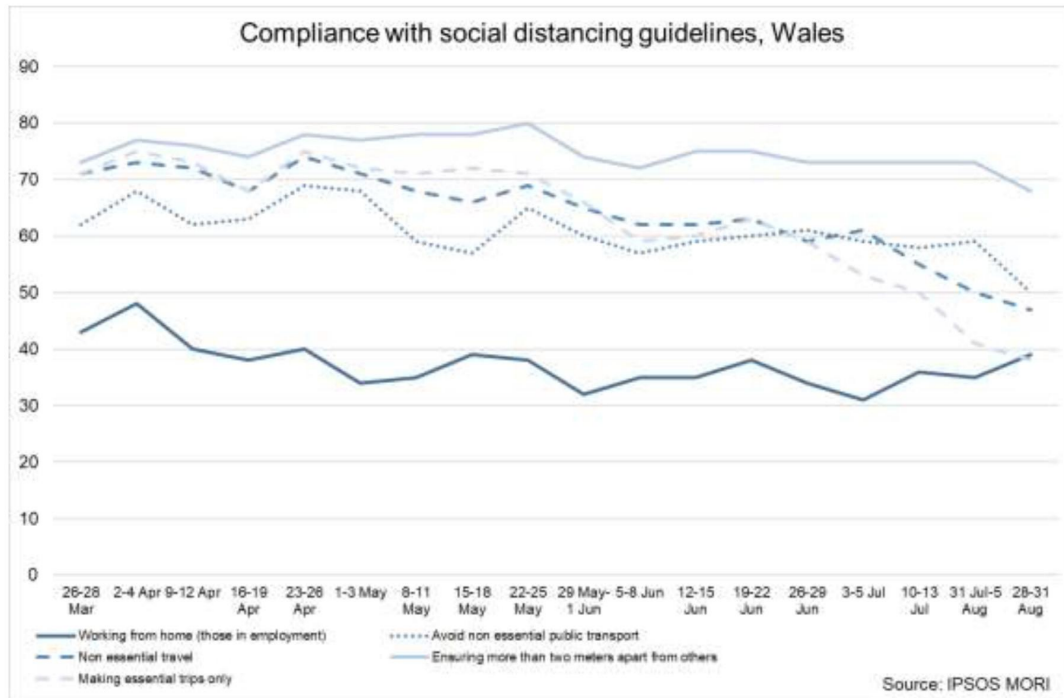
Halving time

- Reliable estimates of halving times cannot currently be estimated due to low numbers of admissions.

Adherence to current measures and mobility

- The most recent [IPSOS MORI data](#) for Wales shows reductions in those ensuring they are more than 2 meters apart from others. There were further reductions in those making essential trips only and avoiding non-essential public transport. These reductions may have occurred as a result of changes in public transport guidelines in mid-August as well as the most recent period covering the August bank holiday weekend.

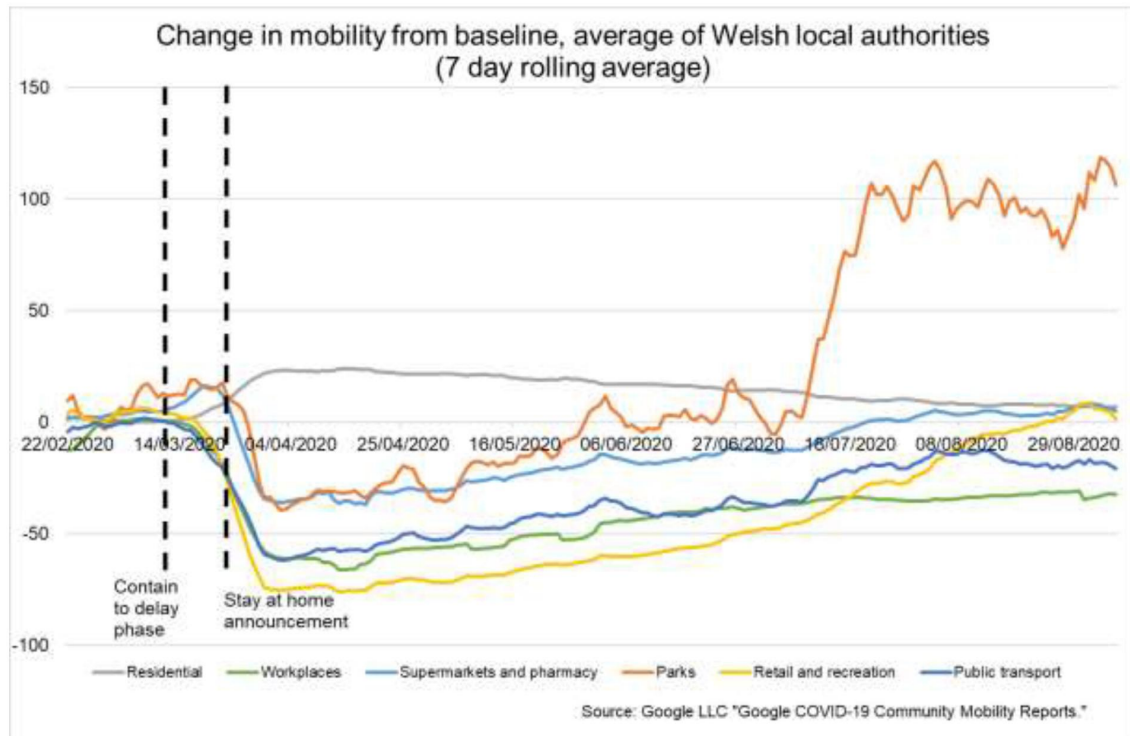
- The figure below represents data collected online by IPSOS MORI as part of a multi-country survey on the Global Advisor platform. Each of the waves has included c.600 respondents in Wales. The sample is broadly representative of the adult population aged 16-74. Data is weighted to reflect the age and gender profile of the Welsh population aged 16-74. All samples have a margin of error around them. For a sample of around 500, this is +/- 4.8 percentage points.



- Mobility data for Wales shows reductions in the last week. The UK was broadly similar.
- In mid-April mobility of [Facebook users](#) in Wales was 50% lower than the baseline, this is 3% lower than the baseline and is down from last week. 23% of Facebook users in Wales are staying put, similar to the previous week. In early April around 45% were staying put – this was around 18% in early March.
- [Apple data](#) showing requests for driving directions in Wales have fallen significantly in the last week. Relative to the baseline the data are higher than the other nations, but the gap has narrowed in the last week. New data from Apple on requests for walking directions shows a fall in the last week, whilst requests for public transport routes show a small fall.
- The [Google mobility data](#) shows reductions in retail & recreation, supermarkets & pharmacy and public transport.
- After lockdown patterns of mobility between England and Wales were broadly similar. Between mid-May and early-June England saw larger increases in mobility than Wales, with Scotland showing a similar pattern to Wales. During July mobility increased more in Wales than in England and that continued

throughout August. The first week in September shows reductions in movement in Wales with data for England showing little change mostly.

- There is evidence from mobile phone data of a large fall in trips ending in Caerphilly after travel restrictions were introduced
- The figure below shows the change in mobility in Wales using Google mobility data. The figures are based on the average of the local authorities that have data. The baseline is the median value, for the corresponding day of the week, during the 5-week period Jan 3–Feb 6, 2020.



ONS Infection Study

- For the week 30 August to 5 September, an average of 0.04% of the community population in Wales had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 0.01% to 0.09%).
- This equates to approximately 1 person in every 2,600 (95% credible interval: 1 in 10,900 to 1 in 1,100), or 1,200 people during this time (95% credible interval: 300 to 2,800).
- Data suggest the rate has been relatively stable over the past 6 weeks. Care should be taken to consider the nature of the survey as local infections show an increase in case numbers in an uneven spread.
- There is considerable uncertainty around the estimates and credible intervals are provided to indicate the range within which we may be confident the true figure lies.

Research

- There are currently 5471 Welsh patients recruited to COVID-19 urgent public health studies, an increase of 102 in last 7 days.

COVID-19 weekly surveillance and epidemiological summary from Public Health Wales

- The proportion of calls to NHS 111 and NHS direct related to possible COVID-19 symptoms remains low but has increased.
- Ambulance calls possibly related to COVID-19 peaked in April and have fallen and currently stable. Hospital and ICU admissions are also low and stable.
- Age-group specific incidence is now highest in those aged 30-49 years and younger than 30 years.
- Recent cases have included travellers returning from countries outside the UK and also local transmission in work places and social networks.
- Activity in schools has recently been noted.
- The main foci of recent activity have been in Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf, although increasing trends are noted in other local authorities.
- There continues to be 1 to 10 new incidents reported per week, mainly in residential care homes, but with recent increases in other settings including clusters amongst family and friends and in workplaces.

NHS Data Dashboard

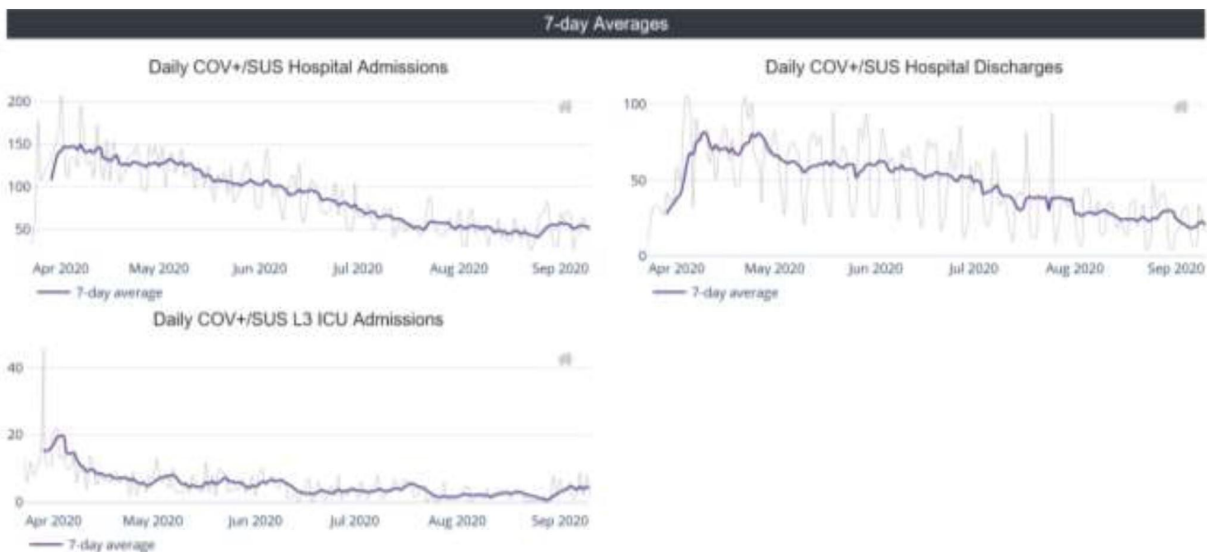
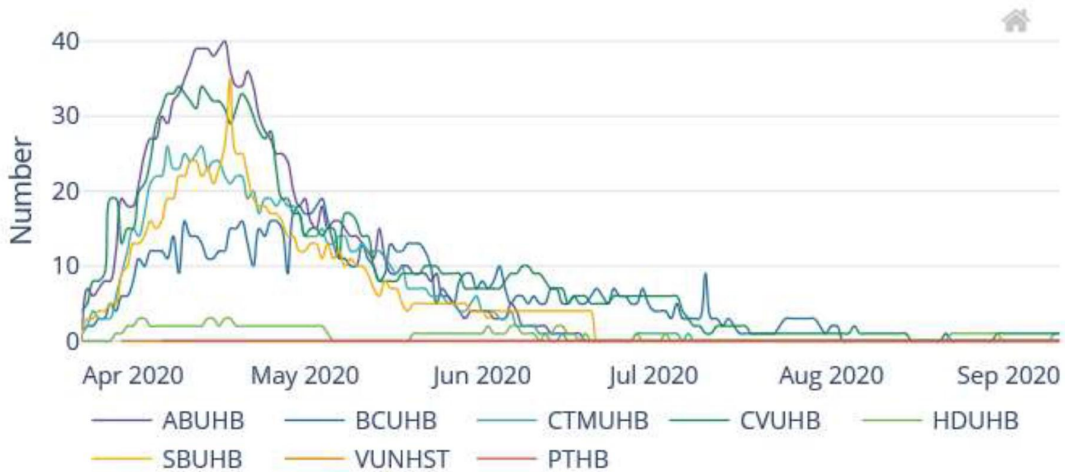
- Hospital data updated at 10/09/2020

L3 ICU

- Of the total of 151 patients in L3 ICU in Wales (up from 129 in previous report):
 - 2 are confirmed COVID patients (1 in CTMUHB and 1 in CVUHB)
 - 5 are suspected COVID patients (2 in ABUHB, 1 in HDUHB, 1 in SBUHB and 1 in CVUHB)

- Of the health boards with L3 ICU units:
 - HDUHB is at 81% occupancy (with 1 suspected COVID patient)
 - CTMUHB is at 74% occupancy (with 1 confirmed COVID patient)
 - SBUHB is at 62% occupancy (with 1 suspected COVID patient)
 - BCUHB is at 59% occupancy (all non-COVID patients)
 - CVUHB is at 57% occupancy (with 1 suspected and 1 confirmed COVID patients)
 - ABUHB is at 44% occupancy (with 2 suspected COVID patients).

Daily L3 ICU Confirmed COVID19 Patients



Professional Head of Intelligence Assessment (PHIA) probability yardstick

- Where appropriate, TAC advice will express Likelihood or confidence in the advice provided using the PHIA probability yardstick to ensure consistency across the different elements of advice.

