

HPAG OSG Sub Group Meeting

05/10/20 at 14:30 – MS Teams

Agenda, Rapid Readout, Decisions & Actions

Chair: **NR**

X-UKG Update

An update was given on cross UK government activity. Key points raised included:

- It is likely the 2000 lost tests are a local issue.
- Surges in cases amongst young people, particularly university students. In some areas, such as Manchester, universities are driving the growth in case numbers. It was noted Bangor is following the trajectory of this pattern.
- Wider issues are also emerging amongst university students, such as breakdowns in community coherence and mental health.
- Increased case numbers across minority groups.
- Increases in hospitalisations and hospital outbreaks should act as a forewarning for Wales.
- Anecdotal information provided suggested that individuals testing positive were attending funerals, it was noted that this could become a legal matter.
- Military or ex-military field force members are going to high risk areas to gain an understanding of the atmospherics. It was noted that individuals were plain clothed.

Intelligence Cell Review

An overview was provided about the current situation in Wales, based on IMT reports. Key points:

- No new SBARs have been submitted for consideration.
- Concerns raised around the absence of an SBAR from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, due last Friday, despite the fact cases have been identified in Bangor University halls of residents.
- Carmarthen will be submitting an SBAR, Llanelli outbreak has spread beyond restricted area.
- Monmouthshire is moving in the wrong direction. There are plans to review the local plan tomorrow (6/10/20).
- It was noted that reports from higher education institutions were not being received, and though students may be tested, their data is not necessarily being processed in Wales (may be due to fact registered at their home address).
- No new information has been received from the Royal Glamorgan Hospital.
- Provisions in place to ensure care homes provide regular updates.

Higher Education

Discussions ensued around the emerging situation in Bangor University, and mitigation measures in place to prevent further outbreaks in higher education

institutions. Group members are seeking assurance universities are sufficiently prepared to handle a large outbreak, as it could fall into the realm of civil contingencies. As such, Reg Kilpatrick suggested Huw Morris should invite a Bangor University representative to the WCCC on 07 October.

NR (NHS Wales) reported she has received detailed control plans from all universities, and is satisfied with their robustness. She also stated the universities have communications networks in place with each other and local authorities.

Group members discussed the idea of enabling people who have tested positive for Covid-19 (students in this case) to intermingle and look after one another. This could mitigate the risk of students with Covid travelling home or letting their parents collect them. However, before any further decisions are made about universities, Group members agreed to leave space for the control plans to play out.

HPAG Consensus: It was agreed that assurance was required that Universities needed to provide assurance that they were able to manage outbreaks within their institutes. It was agreed that Huw Morris, Group Director SHELL, lead for this area would be invited to a meeting to discuss.

Action: Huw Morris to receive invite to attend HPAG sub group to discuss emerging situation within HE institutes.

Action: Huw Morris to invite Bangor representative to WCCC meeting 07 October, where HE is being discussed.

Action: **NR to chase BCUHB for an up to date SBAR.**

Action: **NR to circulate HE control plans.**

Travel Restrictions

The action from the previous meeting was addressed:

- *Commission work from TAC on travel restrictions that provides; the likely impacts of changes; wider harms; options analysis and likely compliance.*
- *Gain an understanding of whether the FM is committed to considering the 5 mile rule as an option.*

Reg Kilpatrick agreed to contact Jane Runeckles to gain understanding as to whether travel restriction changes need to be considered by HPAG imminently.

Fliss Bennee advised that there was no value epidemiologically in this suggestion, as it was originally implemented to control movement from high to low areas of prevalence.

It was agreed that the current message the 'Keep Wales Safe' campaign was a better approach to the 5 mile suggestion as provides a clear message – don't travel unless it is essential. However it was agreed there is an appetite for an evidence-based paper around travel restrictions in order to make further decisions on the subject.

Compliance was also brought up as an area of concern, as it is not something that can be legislated. It was felt that people were tiring of complying and feeling as though they have lost their freedom.

Action: Simon Brindle to pull together policy paper on the 5 mile travel restriction rule.

NHS Covid-19 App

HPAG Consensus: raise the risk levels of Bangor University postcodes to amber, but Gwynedd LA to remain as green.

Action: Secretariat to advise KAS representatives of HPAG consensus that Bangor with university postcodes are rated as amber within the app, and Gwynedd as a whole remains green.

Alleviating Local Health Protection Restrictions

Local intelligence is a vital part to the process for deciding whether restrictions can be eased in areas currently protected by health measures. HPAG members will need to be flexible in expectations for receiving updates from IMTs, and cognisant that each region will have its own risks and evolving transmission rates.

Caerphilly's condition is starting to improve, and a lockdown exit plan will need to be considered.

Action: HPAG group to consider ways NPIs can be eased in areas, such as Caerphilly, where incident rates have fallen and thresholds have been met.

Action: Item to be added to tomorrows (6/10/20) agenda to discuss further)