

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales: Report 1

July 2020



Recommendation 5. The Welsh Government, working with its partners, must ensure an ongoing campaign of clear, consistent and repeated public messaging – at a national and local level – about when to seek a test for Covid-19 and how to do this.

Recommendation 6. The Welsh Government should ensure there is similarly clear and consistent messaging about the value of testing, not only in identifying people with the virus but to assist in research and development of future solutions.

143. Looking ahead, it will be particularly important to the resumption of routine NHS services that a system of regular and repeated testing is in place for health care workers, including asymptomatic staff. This will give confidence to both staff and patients about being able to access NHS services safely. There should be similar arrangements in the care sector. There will be a need to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to support this.

Recommendation 7. The Welsh Government, working with NHS Wales, must develop a clear plan for regular and repeated testing of health and social care staff, including asymptomatic staff.

Capacity

144. It is important to recognise that making testing capacity available is, in itself, only part of delivering an effective testing regime. It must be accompanied by plans that ensure that capacity is accessible and well-publicised, as well as used appropriately and as fully as possible. Looking ahead, it is important to have a clear picture of likely future demand, particularly going into the winter months. We need to be confident that supply will meet increased demand.

Recommendation 8. Given the concerns about a future second spike of infection, the Welsh Government, working with its partners, should assess the likely future demand for testing and take steps to ensure there is sufficient capacity so that anyone who needs a test will be able to access one quickly and easily. As part of this, the Welsh Government and partners must remain alive to the development of different types of testing models.

Turnaround times for test results

145. Delivery of the Test, Trace, Protect Strategy will require a focused and sustained effort on reducing waiting times for test results. This is particularly important in ensuring people are not self-isolating for longer than necessary. Many witnesses told us of unacceptable variations in turnaround time for test results,