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Rhif 2 Capital Quarter, Tyndall Stryd,
Caerdydd CF10 4BZ

Public Health Wales

Number 2 Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street,
Cardiff CF10 4BZ

Our Ref: JW/NM2020 04

Date: 2 March 2020

Mr Vaughan Gething
Minister for Health and Social Services
Via email: psmhss@gov.wales

Dear Minister

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Public Health Wales Response

We write to advise you of the action that the Public Health Wales Board has approved, in responding to the Novel Coronavirus 2019 COVID-19.

From the onset of COVID-19, we have worked closely alongside the Chief Medical Officer and his team. The Board has had regular briefings on the state of readiness in Wales and has noted that internal initial organisational measures have included asking staff to volunteer to support the broad range of roles and functions to support our planning, response and management of the outbreak. The response from staff has been, and continues to be, outstanding.

The unprecedented activity generated following from the change to the case definition last week, the confirmation of the first positive case in Wales and the rapidly developing planning assumptions for COVID-19, means that Public Health Wales now moves onto another level of focus and activity. The organisation continues to be at an *enhanced* emergency response level, in keeping with the other four nations' public health agencies. However, given the rapidly evolving situation, and the context referenced above, the organisation is being mobilised *as if* it is in a major incident. Consequently, the Board had an extraordinary meeting on the 28 February to review the position and approve the next steps.

The briefing at that Board meeting, again, included an overview of the global position, the changing landscape in Europe, the UK and Wales. Board members noted the work underway across the organisation and with the NHS, local government and wider partners, the ongoing close working with the Chief Medical Officer and liaison with other UK public health agencies.