

## Introduction

- Direct and indirect harms should continue to be at the centre of our thinking in order to minimise, reduce or balance harm, as we consider both the releasing and maintaining of COVID-19 control measures. These harms include (but are not limited to) harms to people and communities, health and wellbeing including inequities, as well as harms to the economy and the environment.
- The direct harms of COVID-19 are being mitigated and managed, however indirect harms are less well understood and measured. This paper attempts to set out evidence and data for these harms, providing a high-level summary of considerations which is in no way exhaustive.
- Harm related to COVID-19 can be broadly grouped into 5 key areas and the colour codes below are used to identify the harms summarised in **Annex 1**.

1. Harm directly arising from SARS-CoV2 infections;
2. Indirect COVID-19 harms due to surge pressures on the health and social care system and changes to healthcare activity, such as cancellation or postponement of elective surgeries and other non-urgent treatments (e.g. harm from cessation of screening services) and delayed management of long-term conditions.
3. Harms arising from population based health protection measures (e.g. lockdown) such as, educational harm, psychological harm and isolation from shielding and other measures.
4. Economic harms such as unemployment and reduced business income arising both from COVID-19 directly and population control measures, like lockdown.
5. Harms arising from the way COVID-19 has exacerbated existing, or introduced new, inequalities in our society.

- The four harms have previously been outlined<sup>1</sup>, with the fifth cross-cutting harm explicitly recognising the important impact of inequality on the harm experienced by people in Wales. There have been slightly different definitions given for the four/five harms over time and in different places.
- If this qualitative ‘crowdsourced’ approach used in this paper is of use, it could potentially be applied to other policies.

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government | [Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic: framework for recovery, 24 April 2020](#)