

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Purpose

- 1 To provide Members with an overview and information in relation to the current Novel Coronavirus outbreak situation.

Background

- 2 A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.
- 3 Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.
- 4 Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China.
- 5 Following the World Health Organisation declaration of a Global Health Emergency on 30th January 2020, the Wales Chief Medical Officer, alongside UK counterparts raised the UK risk level from low to moderate.
- 6 This does not mean that the risk to individuals in the UK has changed at this stage, but that government should plan for all eventualities.
- 7 At the time of writing, there were no confirmed cases in Wales.

Planning and Preparation

- 8 Work continues at a UK and Welsh Government level, and within Public Health Wales and Public Health England.
- 9 There is a clear need to provide concise and consistent messaging about the virus.
- 10 The Welsh Government [website](#) provides information to the public regarding the coordinated response to handling the virus.
- 11 For the duration of the outbreak, the Public Health Wales website will be updated daily with a [statement](#), at 15.00 hours, detailing the latest advice and guidance in relation to the virus.

- 12 On 17th February 2020, Public Health Wales made a statement which said, “We are well prepared, with robust infection control measures in place to protect the health of the public.”
- 13 The WLGA is formally linked in to planning for and preparation of, a Welsh response to the outbreak. The WLGA Director for Regeneration and Sustainable Development and the Public Protection Services Policy Officer will provide the main interface with Welsh Government and Public Health colleagues in relation to the virus.
- 14 The WLGA Director for Regeneration and Sustainable Development is already chairing an all-Wales group with senior local authority representatives from each region which maintains strategic dialogue with senior Welsh Government officials on Brexit. This group has been identified as having the potential to co-ordinate communications between Welsh Government and local authorities on issues relating to Coronavirus.
- 15 The WLGA Media and Communications officer will maintain regular contact with media and communications officers within Welsh Government and Public Health Wales for the duration of the outbreak.
- 16 On the advice of Public Health Wales, the WLGA will not produce any media or press statements in relation to the outbreak. This is to ensure no deviation from, and a strict control on public messaging.
- 17 The Public Protection Services Policy Officer maintains regular contact with the Head of Resilience in Welsh Government for operational matters. Other WLGA officers are in contact with Welsh Government officials in specific policy areas as appropriate, for example, social care.
- 18 The Public Protection Services Policy Officer also maintains day to day contact with services such as Emergency Management and Environmental Health across Wales, who, should the outbreak spread to Wales, be required to use powers under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.
- 19 The WLGA Senior Management Team are updated on the situation weekly.

Recommendations

20 Members are asked to:

20.1 Note the content of this report.

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