

Dear Colleague,

I wanted to give you an update on the latest position regarding our clusters of confirmed coronavirus cases within the county borough.

We are responding to this matter as part of a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach, working in very close partnership with colleagues in Public Health Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Welsh Government.

Our main focus at the moment is to reinforce a number of key messages so that residents across the county borough are aware of the seriousness of the situation and understand the vital role they all need to play in reducing the risk of spread.

All partners have been providing a co-ordinated communications response over the weekend and this has resulted in a significant amount of coverage in local newspapers, TV bulletins, website updates and social media activity.

It is important that we get a strong message across that everyone needs to play their part, or we could face renewed restrictions if the infection rate continues to rise.

Mobile Testing Centre

Yesterday (Saturday) saw the first full day of operation of the temporary testing facility, located at Caerphilly Leisure Centre. Large numbers turned up for testing which resulted in ABUHB appealing that only those displaying symptoms should attend. The mobile centre is due to be in situ until Tuesday and will provide vital clinical data to help us better understand the scale of the infection rate within our area.

St Gwladys Primary School

Unfortunately, a member of staff at the school has tested positive for coronavirus and this means that a whole class will need to isolate for 14 days. The head teacher has written to the parents of all the children to provide detailed advice and is working closely with public health colleagues in order to follow all appropriate procedures. As more pupils return to the classroom across the county borough over the coming days, we want to assure parents that all appropriate steps are being taken to keep the whole school community safe. Robust risk assessments have been put in place and these will be critical in helping to protect our children and staff.

Care homes

We made the difficult decision to cease care home visits following a multi-agency meeting on Friday afternoon. This was a very difficult decision to make, but I'm sure everyone can appreciate that we must protect our most elderly and vulnerable residents. We will continuously monitor the situation and will review the decision as appropriate.

Illegal 'rave'

As we face this ongoing public health emergency, I'm sure you were as shocked as I was to hear that Gwent Police were required to disrupt an illegal 'rave' in the Gelligaer area yesterday. Crowds were dispersed, arrests were made and I would

like to thank our police colleagues for taking such swift and decisive action. Let's hope we do not see a repeat of such inconsiderate behaviour in future.

The coming days will be crucial as we analyse the latest public health data and review the extent of the rise in the number of new cases within the county borough.

The decision to implement any localised restrictions would obviously be a matter for Welsh Government to consider following detailed advice and consultation with CCBC and our partners. We will continue to work closely with Ministers over the coming days.

I will, as always, keep you updated about the latest developments, but in the meantime please do your bit to help us control the spread of this deadly virus and keep our community safe. Maintain social distancing at all times, observe good hand cleansing regimes and wear masks where appropriate. In addition, public health agencies are asking that, wherever possible, residents do not travel too far from the county borough over the coming days.

Regards

Christina