

## Update from the Chief Executive – 1<sup>st</sup> June

Dear colleague,

What a lovely day it is today! The sun is out and the sky is blue and it is the 1st of June!

Today we see some changes to lockdown rules. They aren't as much as some would like and they are too much for others! People from two different households are now able to meet outdoors, as long as they stay in their local area (about 5 miles) and observe social distancing guidelines at all times.

A further "surprise" announcement was made yesterday (Sunday!) which also makes this possible for the "shielded population". I'm sure our contact centre and our Environmental Health Officers, will be busy for the next few days, where people seek clarity from us.

The logic underpinning all of this is that the virus is now known to die much quickly outside rather than indoors as long as the good weather lasts! I've attached some FAQ's about these changes for your perusal.

<https://gov.wales/changes-coronavirus-regulations-1-june-frequently-asked-questions>

The first Minister also signalled a number of other things that will be considered in three weeks' time by the First Minister. The most notable of which may be the ability to open retail outlets, that until now have been judged non-essential. We are also expecting an announcement on Wednesday that will give us clarity on plans when schools will reopen across Wales.

As you know, I am one of a key group of advisors providing advice and direction to the Minister for Education, and she is really appreciative of the work of the childcare hubs over recent months. The Minister understands that a lot of work will be required to make the transition from the childcare hubs back into schools at the appropriate time and flexibility will be given to allow those changes to take place.

Whilst infection rates and death rates continue to fall across our county borough, we can see from other countries that this can reverse in the blink of an eye. As an example, South Korea have closed all of their schools within days of opening them all. Their "R" number skyrocketed so they had to change their plan. It is for this reason TTP (Track, Trace and Protect) matters so much.

I have been truly humbled by the fantastic work and the overall offer from everyone involved with the childcare hubs. Our Communications Team have captured just a flavour of this in this video – please do take a look – it will certainly make your day! <https://youtu.be/CqevcftSSlw>

Today also sees the start of the Testing, Tracing Protect (TTP) programme across Wales. It will be a limited start because some core elements at a national level are not yet in place, including a digital system. Nevertheless, we have 100 people across Gwent trained (including 30 from ourselves) and it will operate on a seven day a week basis from today. A huge thanks goes to everyone who has made this happen; as the timescales to get this set up have been absolutely ridiculous! My thanks also goes to those staff who have agreed to redeploy into this area. This is crucial work, without it we will not contain the virus and the R rate will certainly increase above 1. You will recall in my last update, I provided an overview of the financial and economic impact of the pandemic. The role of the Cardiff Capital City Region (CCCR) is more important now, than it

has ever been in supporting the recovery of our businesses across the region and locally. As one of 10 local authorities, we are an active member of the CCCR and lots of great progress has been made in this space over recent times. The CCCR Joint Cabinet (consisting of the 10 LA leaders) recently approved a 10 point post-coronavirus action plan to ensure that we can deliver the significant benefits of this ambitious scheme across the whole region. You can read more here - <https://businessnewswales.com/ccr-regional-cabinet-lays-out-10-priorities-for-post-covid-recovery/>

This week is National Volunteer Week and what better time to showcase the outstanding work that has taken place over recent months as part of our community response to the coronavirus outbreak? I'm so proud of the amazing response we have been able to offer to the most vulnerable people in our county borough, with each member of our community being "matched" with their own personal volunteer. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them all for their contribution. Our partners in GAVO are also instrumental in delivering volunteering within our community and I would also like to pay tribute to all concerned.

Finally, I mentioned last week, that I would like to gather your views on your experiences of agile working. Over a matter of days, we collectively, completely reshaped and repurposed the organisation to equip ourselves to respond to the challenges of the virus. Whilst, I am aware, for many it has been a really positive experience, I am also acutely aware it has been really challenging working alone, without the support of work colleagues, for others. I have shared with you previously, I am really keen to maximise and embed what we have achieved over recent months, but in order to do this I really need to understand the positives and "not so" positives of this new way of working. So please do take the time to answer the few questions in the following survey, as this will help shape our exciting path ahead.

<https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=159067423361>

The survey will run for two weeks with a closing date of Friday 12th June

We certainly have been on an exciting rollercoaster ride over recent weeks, but we have been amazing! Nobody has been where we are going – so it is ours to shape. We have the skills, we have the confidence, we have the networks, we have the passion and most importantly, we have you!

So let's go for it! Have a great week!

Regards