



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **COVID-19 update**
DATE **16 September 2020**
BY **Vaughan Gething - Minister for Health and Social Services**

I want to update you about the very latest situation in the four local authority areas where we have been closely monitoring rising rates of coronavirus:

- In Caerphilly
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Newport

The latest information we have suggests the situation in **Merthyr Tydfil** is stable and we are continuing to closely monitor the situation in **Newport**, analysing the latest testing results, information from the contact tracing teams and working with the local authority and public health experts.

I want to focus now on the developing situation in **Rhondda Cynon Taf**, where, unfortunately, we have continued to see a rapid increase in the number of cases. We are also now seeing evidence of community transmission.

- This is despite the measures the local authority asked residents to voluntarily take to control the spread of the virus.

The very latest figures we have, which are published this afternoon, show the rolling seven-day new case rate is 82.1 per 100,000 people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Yesterday's testing positivity rate was 4.3% – this was the highest positivity rate in Wales.

Our contact tracing teams have been able to trace about half of these cases back to a series of clusters in the borough. The rest are evidence of community transmission.

There are a number of clusters in Rhondda Cynon Taf – two of which are significant. One is associated with a rugby club and pub in the lower Rhondda and the other with a club outing to the Doncaster races, which stopped off at a series of pubs on the way.

Just as in Caerphilly borough, we have seen a rapid increase in cases over a short period, which are mainly linked to people socialising without social distancing and meeting in each other's homes. We have also seen some cases linked to people returning from summer holidays overseas.

The local authority has been proactive in visiting premises throughout the borough over the last week to check compliance with the law and the measures we all need to be taking to protect each other from coronavirus.

These checks have resulted in improvement notices being served on seven supermarkets, which have been complied with.

- A bar has been closed in Pontypridd after a series of breaches were captured on CCTV; a licensed premise was closed in Tonypany and improvement notices for another bar in Pontypridd and a barbers in Tonypany have also been issued.

A further 50 licensed premises were visited by council officers over the weekend and more enforcement action – either improvement notices or closure orders – are likely to follow.

Taken together, this rapid rise in cases with evidence of community transmission throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf and the evidence of non-compliance in many licensed premises across the borough, mean we need to introduce local restrictions in the area to control and, ultimately, reduce the spread of the virus and protect people's health.

As the cause of transmission is similar to what we have seen in Caerphilly borough, the restrictions will be similar.

Action will be taken to end the late night opening of all licensed premises in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

From 6pm tomorrow the following local restrictions will therefore come into effect for people living in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- People will not be allowed to enter or leave the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council area without a reasonable excuse, such as travel for work or education.
- People will only be able to meet outdoors for the time being. People will not be able to meet members of their extended household indoors or form an extended household for the time being.
- All licensed premises will have to close at 11pm in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Everyone over 11 must wear face coverings in indoor public places – as is the case throughout Wales.

We will keep these measures under constant review and they will be formally reviewed in two weeks' time.