
**STATEMENT
BY
THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

TITLE **Update on Local Coronavirus Restrictions**
DATE **29 September 2020**
BY **Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Health and Social Services**

Llywydd, thank you for the opportunity to today update Members about the very latest situation across Wales.

The First Minister, myself and the Minister for North Wales have just come from a meeting of local authority leaders, the police, the NHS and public health experts to discuss the rise in coronavirus in parts of North Wales.

Unfortunately, we are seeing a similar pattern of transmission in coronavirus in Wrexham, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Conwy as we have seen in parts of South Wales. Rates remain low in Gwynedd and Anglesey at the moment.

After extensive discussions, it was agreed by everyone in the meeting that urgent action is needed now to control the spread of the virus in North Wales and to protect people's health.

We will therefore be introducing local restrictions – the same local restrictions which are in place in other parts of South Wales – in Wrexham, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Conwy from 6pm on Thursday October 1.

Llywydd, over the last few weeks, we have seen a significant rise in the number of new cases of coronavirus in Wales overall.

Nationally we must remember that:

1. People are not allowed to meet socially anywhere indoors with people they do not live with and who are not part of an extended household. If people have formed an extended household, they can meet indoors in a group of up to six

people from that extended household at any one time. Under 11s are not included when counting the six as long as they are part of that extended household.

2. People must not gather outdoors in groups of more than 30.
3. Face coverings are mandatory in indoor public spaces (subject to certain exemptions and exceptions)
4. Licensed premises must not sell alcohol after 10pm. This includes pubs, restaurants, Off licenses, supermarkets and other retail outlets.

Whilst case numbers are continuing to rise nationally we have no immediate plans for any further national restrictions. We will of course act if we feel further national restrictions are need to prevent the spread of coronavirus and outweigh the wider harms such restrictions can cause.

We have seen spikes in case numbers in a number of our local authority areas. As a result, a large part of the population of South Wales are now living in areas under local restrictions to protect their health and prevent the spread of coronavirus.

The areas under local restrictions at the moment are:

1. **Caerphilly** (Tuesday 8th September at 6pm)
2. **Rhondda Cynon Taf** (Thursday 17th September 6pm)
3. **Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Newport** (Tuesday 22nd September 6pm)
4. **Llanelli** (Saturday 26th September 6pm)
5. **Cardiff and Swansea** (Sunday 27th September at 6pm)
6. **Neath Port Talbot, the Vale of Glamorgan and Torfaen** (Monday 28th September at 6pm)

The local restrictions are the same in each designated area:

1. People are not be allowed to enter or leave the area without a reasonable excuse.
2. People are not allowed to meet indoors with anyone they do not live with for the time being – this includes extended households (sometimes called a “bubble”) – they have been suspended for the time being.
3. All licensed premises have to stop serving alcohol at 10pm.
4. Everyone must work from home wherever possible.

To be clear, a reasonable excuse to leave or enter an area includes going to work where people cannot work from home, or using public services that are not available locally. It also includes visiting family or close friends on compassionate grounds if necessary.

People who have urgent hospital appointments can leave or enter an area, although we recommend that all non-urgent appointments are postponed.

For those who share parental responsibility for a child, they can continue existing arrangements for access and contact, including leaving or entering a local area if needed.

Similarly childcare arrangements can continue. That includes where this is provided by grandparents although clearly there are increased risks with older people and we recommend that alternative care arrangements are found if possible. As a minimum everyone should ensure they are regularly washing their hands and that wider guidance on managing the virus is followed.

Routine visits to care homes in areas under local restrictions have been suspended at the present time. Visits to care homes may still take place in exceptional circumstances such as end of life, however this should be discussed with the individual care home before travelling.

Children, providing they are well, should continue to go to school, keeping schools open remains our top priority.

This is not a regional lockdown. We have introduced a series of local restrictions in these South Wales local authority areas to respond to a specific rise in cases in each area, all of which have distinct and unique chains of transmission.

The local measures have been selected to maximise the impact on reducing coronavirus transmission and minimise the wider harms such restrictions can cause. The measures are designed to supplement and enhance local responses from the local authority, local health boards and police that are already underway.

We will keep these measures under constant review and we will continue to hold meetings with public health experts, local authority leaders, the NHS, police and police and crime commissioners to assess the latest position in each of these areas.

In Caerphilly and Newport, we have seen real falls in case numbers and we are hopeful that will be able to take action to relax these restrictions in these areas if the case numbers continue to fall.

It is important everyone follows the rules where they live. We need everyone's help to bring coronavirus under control. It is only by working together that we will be able to reduce coronavirus, protect ourselves and our loved ones and keep Wales safe.

Check against delivery