

Test, Trace, Protect Transition briefing note – 24 June 2022



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

This note is to provide an update on the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) transition plans that form part of the Welsh Government's ***'Together for a safe future: Wales long-term COVID-19 transition from pandemic to endemic'***.

Our plan under COVID Stable recognised that we still expect to encounter additional waves of infection and new variants to emerge, and some may become dominant. But these waves will not put unsustainable pressure on the Health and Social Care system. Vaccines and other pharmaceutical interventions are expected to remain effective in preventing serious illness.

We are currently, after a gradual decline in cases and prevalence during the transition period, seeing an uptick in cases. The ONS survey for the week 5 to 11 June 2022 showed an increase across the UK and estimated that 2.13% (1 in 45) of the community population in Wales had COVID-19. The BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants are contributing to this increase as they become more dominant across the UK. Accumulating evidence from several countries indicates these sub-variants appear not to be more severe.

Indicative timescales in the transition plan prepared for the removal of symptomatic lateral flow testing for the public on 30 June. Due to the current higher prevalence of COVID-19 in Wales, the Health Minister will confirm today (24 June 2022) that access to free LFD tests will be extended in Wales until July 31 2022.

Position from 1 July 2022

- The minister has confirmed the following will remain in place until 31 July 2022:
 - Free LFD tests will be available for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms
 - LFD and PCR testing for those eligible for COVID-19 treatments
 - PCR testing for COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses for symptomatic care home residents and prisoners
 - Testing for hospital patients based on clinical judgement and for care home residents returning from inpatient hospital stays
 - LFD testing for symptomatic health and social care staff.
 - LFD tests for twice weekly asymptomatic testing for those working with the vulnerable such as health and social care staff.
- Those visiting people in care homes should continue to test using tests provided by the care home they are visiting.
- Self-isolation support payments of £500 will end from July 1. If somebody tested positive and had to self-isolate on or before 30 June, and is eligible for support, they have 21 days to make a claim after their last day of self-isolation.
- The COVID-19 Statutory Sick Pay Enhancement scheme will be extended until 31 August 2022 to support social care staff to stay away from work due to testing positive.

- Routine contact tracing will end on 30 June 2022 as planned. From 1 July 2022 tracing will be targeted on protecting the most vulnerable and supporting the response to local outbreaks. Public Health Wales are working on a revised script that will help to identify cases that would benefit from a full trace. Contacts of positive cases will receive an automatic text message directing them to the relevant guidance.
- We are seeing cases of COVID-19 rise again after a period of decline. This is largely driven by the BA4 and BA5 variants of Omicron, which are becoming dominant across the UK.
- Wales will continue to provide access to free lateral flow tests for people with symptoms for a further month, to the end of July to support people to take protective measures to protect the more vulnerable. People will be advised if positive to stay at home for five days and test at day 5 and 6.
- If you have respiratory symptoms and test negative you are also strongly advised to stay at home until you are well to avoid spreading illness and continue to take precautions such as regularly washing your hands and wearing a face mask, particularly in crowded indoor places and when around vulnerable people. Please do not visit hospitals or care homes if you are unwell or test positive.
- Vaccination remains the most effective way to protect yourself from COVID-19. If you are eligible for a spring booster jab, you *should still come forward for vaccination if you have not already done so. This will ensure you have good protection between now and when a booster is offered in autumn.* And remember that it is only available until 30 June so there is enough of a gap before the autumn boosters begin.
- We are urging parents to consider vaccinating their children now so that they are fully protected by the time the new school year begins in September, to minimise further disruption to their school life.

Moving forward

Our objectives moving forward will continue to focus on:

- Protecting the vulnerable from severe disease by enabling access to vaccination, treatments; and safeguarding against the risk of infection.
- Maintaining capacity to respond to localised outbreaks and in high-risk settings.
- Retaining effective surveillance systems to identify any deterioration in the situation such as from harmful variants and mutations of concern; and
- Preparing for the possible resurgence of the virus

A written statement and press notice are being issued regarding these changes. You can download them [here](#).

Relevant guidance will be updated on the [Welsh Government website](#) as changes are made.

We have also created a range of assets promoting protective behaviours that our partners can download and share on their channels in the coming weeks and months which we will share very shortly.

For further information contact: Covid19.SocialCareTesting@gov.wales