

Swansea Bay UHB Incident Management Team: Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendations (SBAR)

TITLE: Swansea Bay UHB Regional IMT SBAR

CONTROL INFORMATION: Completed by Keith Reid, Exec DPH, SBUHB

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Synopsis: there has been some levelling off in case incidence and positivity rates across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. There is some suspicion that this is artefactual given the sudden fall in case numbers.

There is an ongoing incident/cluster at Morriston Hospital which is being actively investigated and is causing some disruption to services.

There has been some reduction in calls to service for South Wales Police across the Region.

No specific additional measures were proposed today.

However, there was a request for consideration of changing the approach so self-isolation in secondary education to reduce disruption. to

Situation:

The IMT reports that:

1. The increase in case incidence and positivity rates across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot appears to be levelling off. This has been associated with a sudden fall in positive cases and a modest reduction in positivity rates. There is some suspicion that this may artefactual due to reporting delays.
2. There remains no evidence currently of transmission among pupils in schools. There are a number of schools with clusters of infection in teaching staff and that may have arisen due to in-school transmission.
3. Despite evidence of sporadic cases and some ongoing small clusters within the University student population there is no evidence of a significant outbreak in the student population. A hall of residence at Swansea University has a growing number of cases (now 15 cases, an additional 5 cases over the weekend), control measures are now in place and cases appear to be linked rather than an outbreak.
4. There is a low level of cases in early years education settings, mainly in staff, which is having an impact on operations due to self-isolation requirements applying to the whole setting.
5. Currently there is confidence in the control measures within the residential care sector. Three homes which have undergone whole home testing have returned no positive results.

6. The joint letter from the Chief Medical Officer and Director of Social Services at Welsh Government has created some confusion over the intended testing approach. No change has been implemented locally.
7. The Aberpergwm colliery will be reopening on Tuesday 13th October with additional control measures in place.
8. There are an additional 6 large employers which are under active management including at, TATA steel and DVLA. There has been additional testing deployed to DVLA around a cluster where there is suspected in workplace transmission – results awaited.
9. There is an ongoing incident / cluster in Morriston Hospital under active investigation. There are three clinical areas affected. There is a mix of patients and staff involved and the routes of transmission appear to be mixed but do include suspected in-hospital infection. There has been a cancellation of some elective cardiac activity as a consequence.
10. There has been <5 additional cases in the Singleton Maternity Unit cluster. All those affected are staff. No risk to patients has been identified.
11. There is a continuing rise in number of COVID-19 patients being treated in hospital (now at 39 inpatients with 5 of those on intensive care).

Case incidence, positivity rates and case numbers for City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough areas [source CDSC, PHW]

	Swansea	NPT	Swansea	NPT	Swansea	NPT
	Cases per 100K per week		Positivity Rate		Case Numbers	
21/09	40.1	15.4	3.3%	1.3%	37	<5
23/09	50.6	18.1	4.0%	1.6%	41	8
24/09	63.6	29.3	4.7%	2.4%	28	19
25/09	82.2	34.2	5.8%	2.8%	58	<5
26/09	93.1	37.0	6.2%	2.9%	36	8
27/09	97.6	41.2	6.3%	3.2%	26	9
28/09	98.8	48.8	6.1%	3.7%	28	15
29/09	100.0	53.0	6.1%	3.9%	27	12
30/09	94.3	54.4	5.8%	4.1%	25	12
01/10	96.4	54.4	6.1%	4.3%	51	15
02/10	92.3	59.3	6.3%	4.7%	55	22
03/10	97.2	65.6	7.2%	5.4%	30	9
04/10	107.7	80.2	8.1%	6.6%	59	36
05/10	111.7	81.6	8.1%	6.7%	33	14
06/10	130.8	91.4	9.0%	7.0%	76	29
07/10	120.7	95.1	9.8%	8.0%	48	24
08/10	137.3	117.9	9.4%	8.6%	64	43
09/10	142.9	119.3	9.4%	8.7%	44	16
10/10	130.0	124.9	8.6%	9.3%	32	28
11/10	113.4	108.2	8.0%	8.7%	12	8

Background:

We are seeing a reversal of the increase in incidence and in positivity rates accompanied by a large reduction in reported cases. This is not yet an established trend and there remains some suspicion locally that delays in issuing results may be contributing to the observed trends.

The overall pattern of disease is unchanged with a large number of sporadic cases with a small number of clusters. There is a small number of clusters with evidence of ongoing transmission associated with specific sites or locations.

The Aberpergwm Colliery is scheduled to reopen on 13th October with mitigating measures in place.

Results of additional testing in one group of workers in DVLA is awaited. The remainder of cases within DVLA reflect community acquisition.

At TATA steel there is an intention for weekly engagement with this site and there is exploration of additional testing in support of maintaining critical site infrastructure.

There has been a modest reduction in COVID related calls for service to South Wales Police compared with the previous 7 days. The majority remain from anti-social behaviour (parties or gatherings) or other breaches of local restrictions. There have been no further cases among Police staff (5 total).

There are two clinical areas in Morriston with patients and staff now identified as SARS-CoV-2 positive as a consequence of nosocomial transmission. This has led to cancellation of some elective procedures. Discharged patients are not yet aware that they may have been in contact with a positive case and messaging around risk is being developed to enable active follow-up. This outbreak has coincided with a breakdown in the SARS-CoV-2 testing platform at Singleton laboratory which has led to a delay in identifying positive staff and patients. Daily briefings are being supplied through Infection Prevention and Control reporting channels into Welsh Government.

The number of cases in the maternity unit at Singleton is now 9 confirmed. No risk to patients has been identified.

For care homes there is ongoing fortnightly staff testing and there remain only two settings with positive residents, neither has had new cases for 12 days now. However, 26 establishments have had cases among staff and are engaging with EHO support.

There has been no discussion locally about seeking additional Public Health Wales capacity to increase the frequency of testing in care home staff in Swansea Bay. The joint CMO / Deputy DG letter is not interpreted locally as requiring this approach and the use of PHW capacity to undertake testing would require significant additional resource to undertake the necessary administration to generate ETRs for this activity. There is not currently evidence of increased risk to the sector locally to justify this approach. Discussions with local Directors of Adult Social Services did not take place today as expected and will be rescheduled.

Three homes were subject to whole home testing since our last SBAR and these have returned no positive results in residents.

The number of MFFD patients on our acute sites continues to increase.

There are now 51 (additional 2 from 9th October) schools who have recorded one or more cases in the past 14 days (15 schools with more than one case, range 2 – up from 12). However, there remains no convincing evidence of transmission among pupils within schools. There has been the suggestion of reducing bubble size within schools to reduce the disruption associated with isolated single cases. This is the subject of a specific recommendation to Welsh Government.

There are a small number of schools where there are clusters of infection among staff and a question as to whether in-school transmission may have occurred.

There is infection within two student halls of residence of Swansea University with 15 cases in one hall and 6 in the other (up from 10 and <5). This situation is being closely monitored. At present there is no evidence of linked cases.

There remains a small number of cases associated with early years settings (nursery or early years education providers) but this is primarily in staff of those settings.

Testing capacity is now stable after the recent increase at both drive through sites and with the deployment of the Mobile Testing Units. There have been further issues with the portal booking for the MTUs over the weekend leading to loss of testing opportunities. There was an issue with the telephone lines to the SBUHB call centre today but that is now resolved. The Local Test Site / Walk-In Centre is now operational but with a lower than expected capacity of 140 tests per 12 hours.

The contact tracing teams continue to operate under strain. Backward contact tracing is not being undertaken.

The rolling programme of communications continues as previously identified plus a reminder that any of the key symptoms, no matter how minor, are an indication to self-isolate and seek testing.

There is an enhanced web-based communication aimed at businesses to encourage working from home, advise against car sharing and to promote adherence to social distancing in the workplace.

Assessment:

There has been a change in trajectory but no convincing evidence of a reduction in case incidence, only a slowing in rate of increase. It is too early to ascribe this change to the current control measure.

There remains a moderate impact on the local community as a consequence of the imposition of health protection area status on each local authority.

The impact of cases and clusters remains variable across the region. The cluster within Morriston Hospital is having an impact on access to specialised healthcare and contingency arrangements are being put in place.

Regional action remains focused on compliance in workplaces and in commercial premises and on communications to businesses and the general public on adherence to BSIs.

There is a need for clarity over the mandated approach to care home testing in the CMO / Deputy DG letter of 9th October. At present this is being interpreted within Swansea Bay as not requiring any departure from the current testing approach.

There remains a need for additional regional capacity to deliver timely surveillance to guide action. The Hospital Epidemiologist is currently fully deployed supporting the investigation into the cluster within Morriston Hospital.

The Regional IMT continues to meet three times a week to balance the considerable operational response demands on IMT members with the ability to maintain situational awareness in line with the periodicity of changes in case rates and numbers.

RAG status currently	RAG status with further increases
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Recommendations and Interventions sought:

At Local Authority level:

No specific interventions sought – to continue to amplify messaging around workplace risk mitigation and that indoor socialising with anyone from outside the household is not permitted in any setting.

At Welsh Government level:

A request to examine the evidence of COVID transmission specifically amongst pupils (rather than teachers) in schools. As a consequence of this consider whether the current guidance on managing cases in schools needs to be updated. Within the Swansea Bay region experience would suggest that there is little evidence of transmission in the school environment between pupils. Where transmission does occur it would appear to happen amongst friendship groups, travel to/from school or during extra-curricular activities. If this is replicated across Wales it may make the case for relaxing current guidance around withdrawing whole groups / bubbles for a two week period following confirmation of one case alone.

Submit completed forms to: HealthProtection@Gov.Wales