

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

# Covid-19 Post-incident Report

March to July 2020

**PREPARED BY:** The Emergency Planning Team  
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## Report authors and review record

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This document has been prepared for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. This document is intended for post-incident learning purposes.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose

This report deals with the operational, tactical and strategic response to Covid-19 within the Neath Port Talbot area. Whilst this report is for the local authority, and covers the internal debrief, elements of the multi-agency response will also be reviewed and shared where necessary with other responding agencies to share lessons learnt.

This report does not attempt to exhaustively detail or comprehensively summarise the incident. The report does not include or comment upon matters identified in other debriefs or post-incident reports.

Recommendations made within this post incident report will be shared across the local authority, and will be added to a Forward Action Plan for recommendations to be considered and actioned where necessary.

## 1.2. Aim of Report

To review the response to Covid-19 to identify good practice and make recommendations for improvements.

## 1.3. Incident Debrief

Due to the restrictions in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the number of Council Officers involved throughout the response to Covid-19, the decision was made to hold an incident debrief through the use of surveys.

The Emergency Planning Team hosted three separate debrief surveys for those involved at the different levels of incident command; operational, tactical and strategic. For the purposes of this debrief, Council Officers were split into the three levels of command based on their role during the response to Covid-19:

- **Operational level:** Council Officers who were involved in the Council's response sub-groups e.g. involvement in NPT Safe and Well, field hospital, care of the dead.
- **Tactical level:** Council Officers who led / chaired the Council's response sub-groups, and/or attended multi-agency tactical level coordination groups e.g. local health board groups / exercises.
- **Strategic level:** Council Officers who participated in the Incident Management Team, and/or attended multi-agency strategic level coordination groups e.g. South Wales Local Resilience Forum (SWLRF) strategic groups / exercises.

Additionally, a debrief session for Emergency Planning Duty Officers involved in the response to Covid-19 was held on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Ideally, debrief sessions will be held with Council Officers to share the findings of this post incident report. However, given the current circumstances this will be dependent on the progression of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent incident responses. It

should be noted that incident debriefs and post incident reports are not a mandatory requirement, but for the purpose of sharing lessons learned after an incident has occurred.

## **2. Incident and Response Overview**

### **2.1. World Overview**

In Late December 2019 to early January 2020, reports were emerging from the People's Republic of China (ROC) of clusters of atypical pneumonia cases in Wuhan. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) activated its Incident Management Support Team as part of its emergency response framework. By 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020, WHO reported that Chinese authorities had determined the cases were caused by a novel coronavirus. Between 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020, cases began to emerge in Thailand and Japan, linked to persons who had travelled to Wuhan. By the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020, it became clear that there was some human-to-human transmission of the novel coronavirus. On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020, the Chinese Government imposed a lockdown on Wuhan and other cities within the Hubei province in an effort to quarantine the centre of the outbreak. On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020, France declared it now found cases of the novel coronavirus, with each of the cases being linked to travel to Wuhan. On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020, WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern following 98 cases and no deaths in 18 countries outside of China.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020, WHO finalised its 'Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan'. WHO began holding daily media briefings on the novel coronavirus on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020. On 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020, WHO announced the novel coronavirus would be named Covid-19 (to avoid inaccuracies and stigma by not referring to a geographical location, animal, an individual or a group of people). On 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020, WHO published the 'Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response' document, and further guidance was issued on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for organisers of mass gatherings based on the lessons learnt from the H1N1 and Ebola outbreaks. On 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020, WHO stated in a press conference that much of the global community was not ready to implement a lockdown of the scale seen in China.

By the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020, confirmed cases of Covid-19 surpass 100,000 globally, as a result WHO issued a consolidated package of existing guidance cover preparedness, readiness and response actions for four different transmission scenarios (no cases, sporadic cases, cluster of cases and community transmission). On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, WHO assessed that Covid-19 was now characterised as a pandemic, as the virus had spread worldwide. On the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the number of confirmed cases globally was 124,195 and the number of deaths was 4,641.

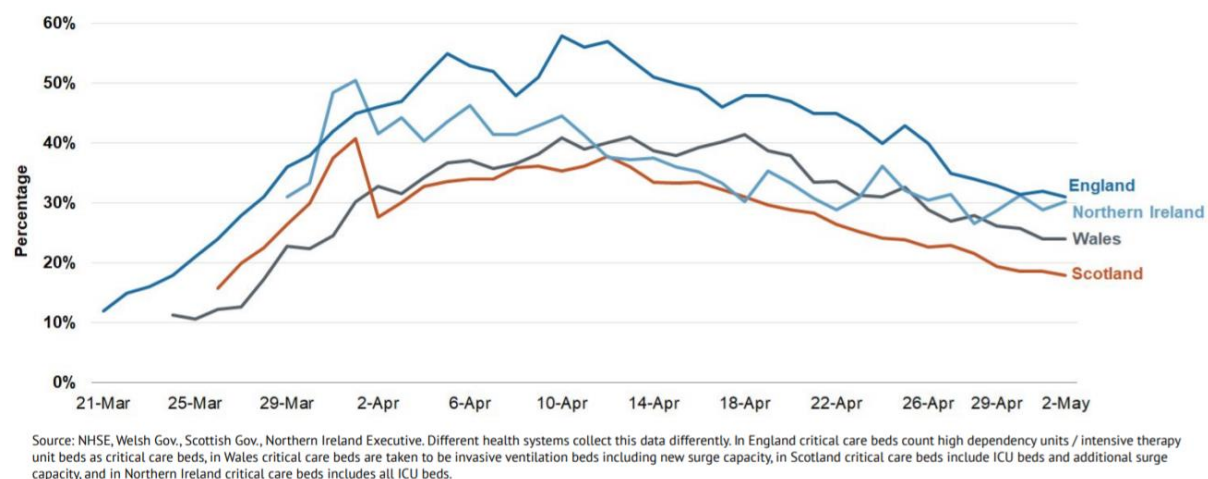
As of 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020, figures from [WHO](#) suggest there are 18,908,001 (0.33% of the global population) confirmed cases globally, along with 703,942 deaths globally (0.01% of the global population).<sup>1</sup>

## 2.1. UK Overview

The UK Government has implemented a range of extensive measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. An overview of the UK Governments response to Covid-19 between January to April 2020 can be found via the [National Audit Office](#), the timeline provided within the [National Audit Office](#) report can be found on page 4 of this report (figures 3 and 4).

An overview of the UK's response to Covid-19 can be found in figures 3 and 4, which depicts a timeline of key events in the response. As of 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020, figures from [WHO](#) suggest there have been 308,138 (0.46% of the UK population) confirmed cases in the UK, along with 41,258 deaths in the UK (0.06% of the UK population). Death figures increased from 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020 as care home deaths began to be included within the official figures.<sup>2</sup> The case fatality rate as of 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 for the UK was 13.4%. The R number and growth rate in the UK was estimated to be at 3 during March 2020.

During the peak of the outbreak (peaks for the four UK nations varied across April 2020), up to 60% of England's critical care beds were occupied with Covid-19 patients, around 50% of Northern Ireland's critical care beds were occupied with Covid-19 patients, and around 40% of Scotland's and Wales' critical care beds were occupied with Covid-19 patients (see figure 1 for more information).



**Figure 1: Critical care beds with Covid-19 patients, UK ([UK Government, May 2020](#)).**

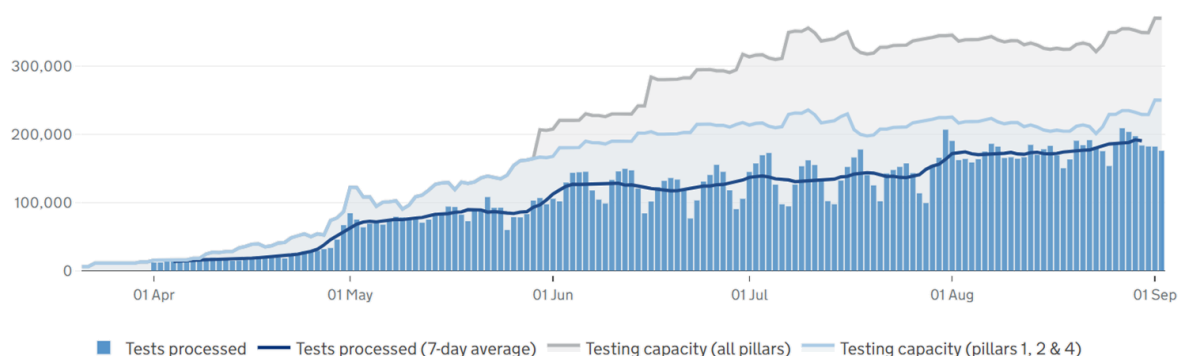
As the number of Covid-19 cases began to rise in the UK, on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the UK Government stopped widespread community testing and Contact Tracing, and

<sup>1</sup> Percentages based on global population figure of 7,794,798,739 on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 ([Worldometer](#), September 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Percentages based on UK population figure of 66,796,807 on June 2019 ([Office for National Statistics](#), September 2020)



began concentrating on hospital patients as the UK Government deemed unreliable and counterproductive to test people who did not display symptoms of Covid-19, and that it was considered no longer necessary to identify every case. As of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 29,746 Covid-19 tests were carried out in the UK. On March 27<sup>th</sup> 2020, the UK Government announces that testing will be extended to cover all frontline NHS staff – by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the UK Government announces that only 0.4% of frontline NHS workers in England have been tested so far. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the UK Government announces that Covid-19 testing is being hampered by the availability of certain chemicals used within the testing process, which limited the ability to rapidly increase the UK's testing capacity. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 143,186 tests were carried out in the UK. On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, the UK Government announces the ambitious goal of reaching a testing capacity of 100,000 per day by the end of April. On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020, the UK Government announces it had achieved this target as 122,347 tests were carried out between 09:00 on 30<sup>th</sup> April and 09:00 on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020. On 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the UK Government announces that testing will be extended to cover all care home residents with symptoms and all new care home residents who are discharged from hospital. On 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020, testing is expanded to more frontline workers, including to police and prison staff, fire and rescue workers, and local authority staff working with vulnerable people or rough sleepers. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, testing is expanded to cover essential workers and their households. The graph in figure 2 shows the UK's testing capacity and the number of tests carried out across the UK.



**Figure 2:** Number of lab-confirmed positive or negative COVID-19 test results, by date reported ([UK Government, September 2020](#)).<sup>3</sup>

The UK Government began lifting lockdown measures in England on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, enabling the public to return to work if they couldn't work from home. As health is a devolved matter, Northern Ireland remained in lockdown until 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020,

<sup>3</sup> The government's mass testing programme includes four types of tests known as pillars:

- Pillar 1: NHS and PHE Testing – antigen swab testing in Public Health England (PHE) labs and NHS hospitals for those with a clinical need, and health and care workers
- Pillar 2: Commercial partner testing – antigen swab testing for the wider population, as set out in government guidance - pillar 2 testing reported in this dashboard only includes tests that were processed by a lab
- Pillar 3: Antibody testing – antibody serology testing to show if people have antibodies from having had COVID-19, reported from 1st June onwards
- Pillar 4: Surveillance testing – antibody serology and antigen swab testing for national surveillance supported by PHE, ONS, Biobank, universities and other partners to learn more about the prevalence and spread of the virus and for other testing research purposes, for example on the accuracy and ease of use of home testing



Scotland remained in lockdown until the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020, and Wales remained in lockdown until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.

## 2.2. Wales Overview

The Welsh Government implemented a range of extensive measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. An overview of the Welsh Governments response to Covid-19 between January to July 2020 can be found via [Senedd Research](#) (2020), a summary of the timeline provided by [Senedd Research](#) (2020) can be found on in figure 5, which depicts a timeline of key events in the response. Within Wales, many of these measures were supported via the four Local Resilience Forums, which helped to coordinate the response of public organisations and ensured collaborative working.

As of 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020, figures from [Public Health Wales](#) (2020) suggest there have been 17,474 (0.55% of the Welsh population) confirmed cases in Wales, along with 1,584 deaths in Wales (0.002% of the Welsh population). The case fatality rate as of 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 for Wales was 9%.

On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 63% of Wales' critical care beds were occupied with confirmed Covid-19 patients ([Public Health Wales](#), 2020). During March to early May, estimates of adherence to lockdown measures in Wales was estimated to be between 60% and 70% ([Welsh Government Technical Advisory Cell](#), 2020).

By 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020, 99% of food parcels ordered for extremely vulnerable persons / shielded persons across Wales were either handed to the resident or left on the doorstep.

## 2.3. Neath Port Talbot Overview

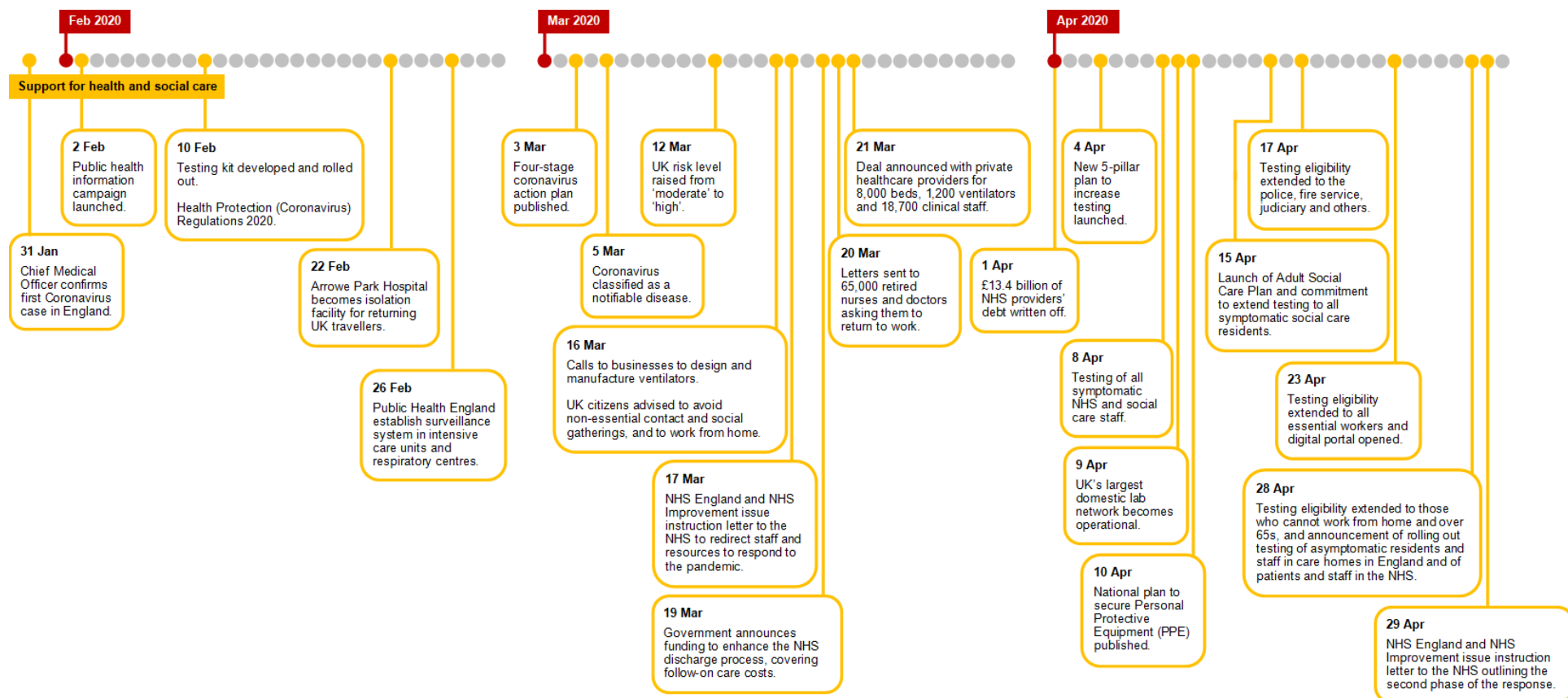
As a result of The Welsh Government measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) responded by establishing a single-agency Incident Management Team and subsequent response sub-groups, whilst also participating within the Multi-agency Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups of South Wales Local Resilience Forum (SWLRF), and the relevant localised multi-agency Swansea Bay response cells (health related). An overview of NPTCBCs response to Covid-19 between January to July 2020 can be found in the timeline in figure 6, which depicts a timeline of key events in the NPTCBC response. As part of NPTCBC's to Covid-19, the Council has been involved with many key aspects of the response, such as:

- Construction of a temporary field hospital at Llandarcy,
- Supporting shielded persons via the new NPT Safe and Well service,
- Providing continued care to vulnerable children and children of critical workers via school hubs,
- Providing support to children on the Free School Meal scheme

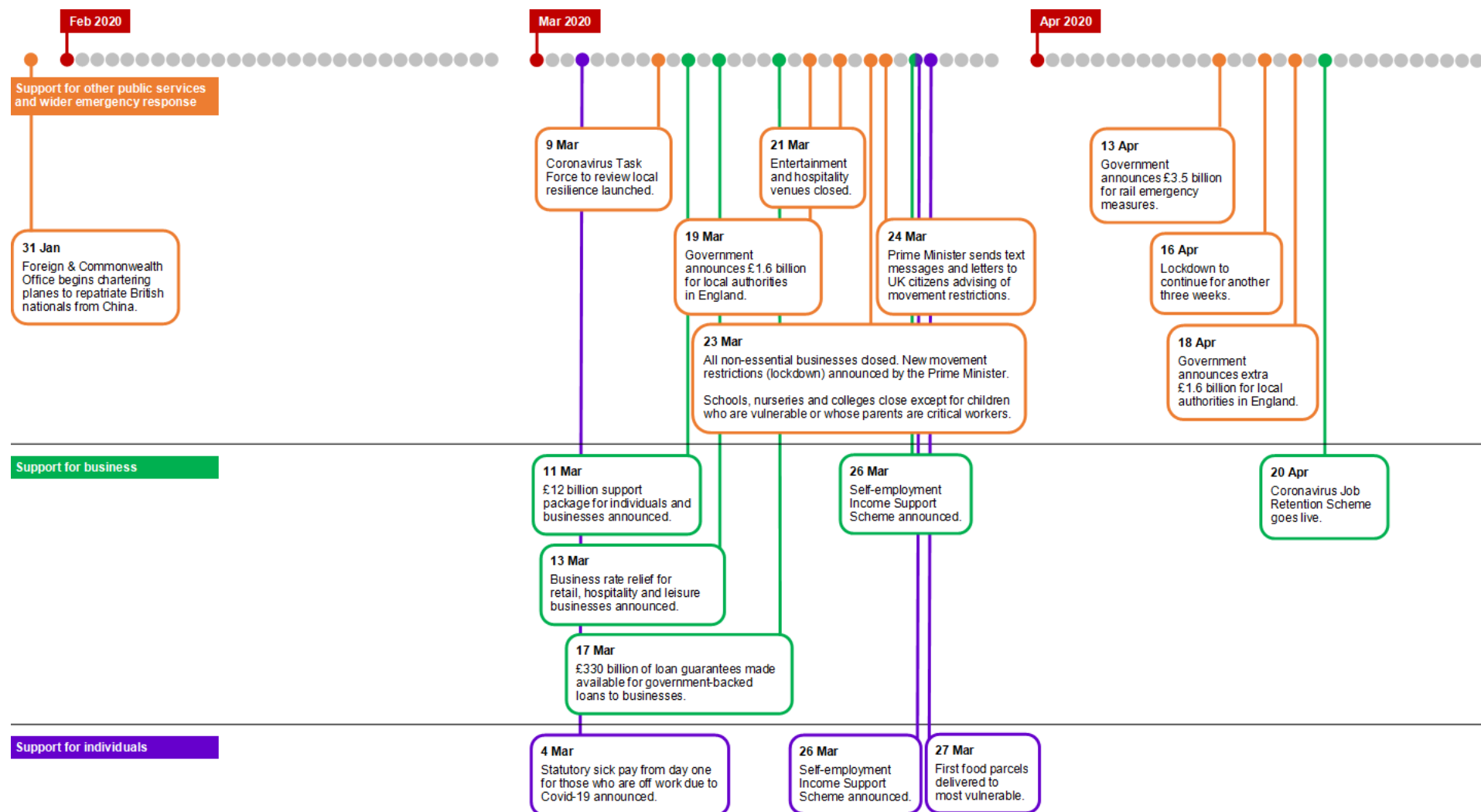
- Providing support to the care sector and persons requiring the support for the Council (e.g. homeless persons, high risk individuals needing social services support, PPE, discharging of hospital patients to care homes),
- Providing financial support to local businesses,
- Provision of enforcement in relation to the Health Protection Regulations,
- Provision of staff for Test, Trace and Protect services, and
- Coordinating efforts to manage mass fatalities and care of the dead issues.

An incident log for this incident is available on the [DRAGON 2 System](#) or is available upon request from the [Emergency Planning Team](#).

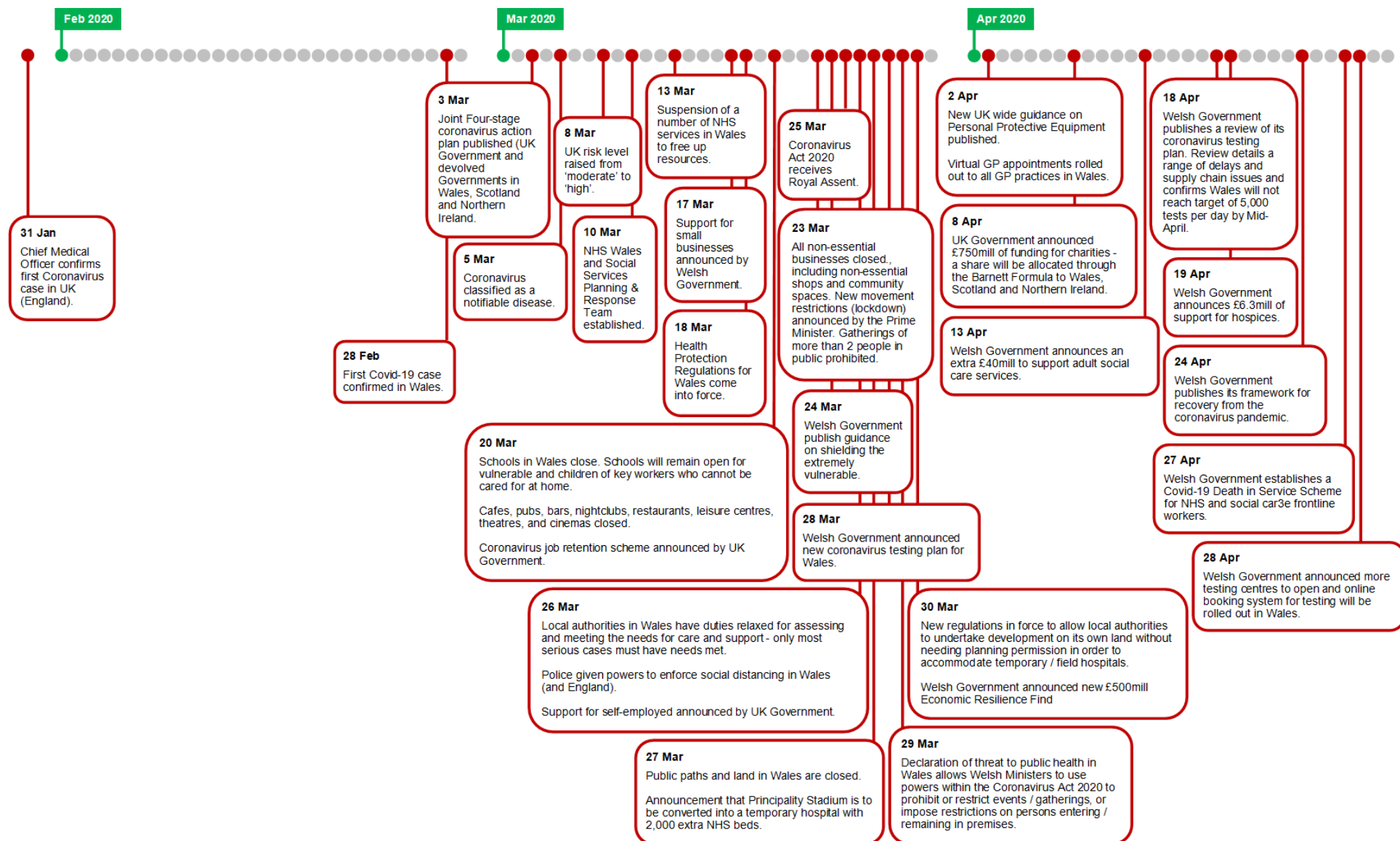
As of 3rd August 2020, figures from [Public Health Wales](#) (2020) suggest there have been 2,003 confirmed cases in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area, along with 306 deaths in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area. The case fatality rate as of 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 for the Swansea Bay University Health Board area was 15%.



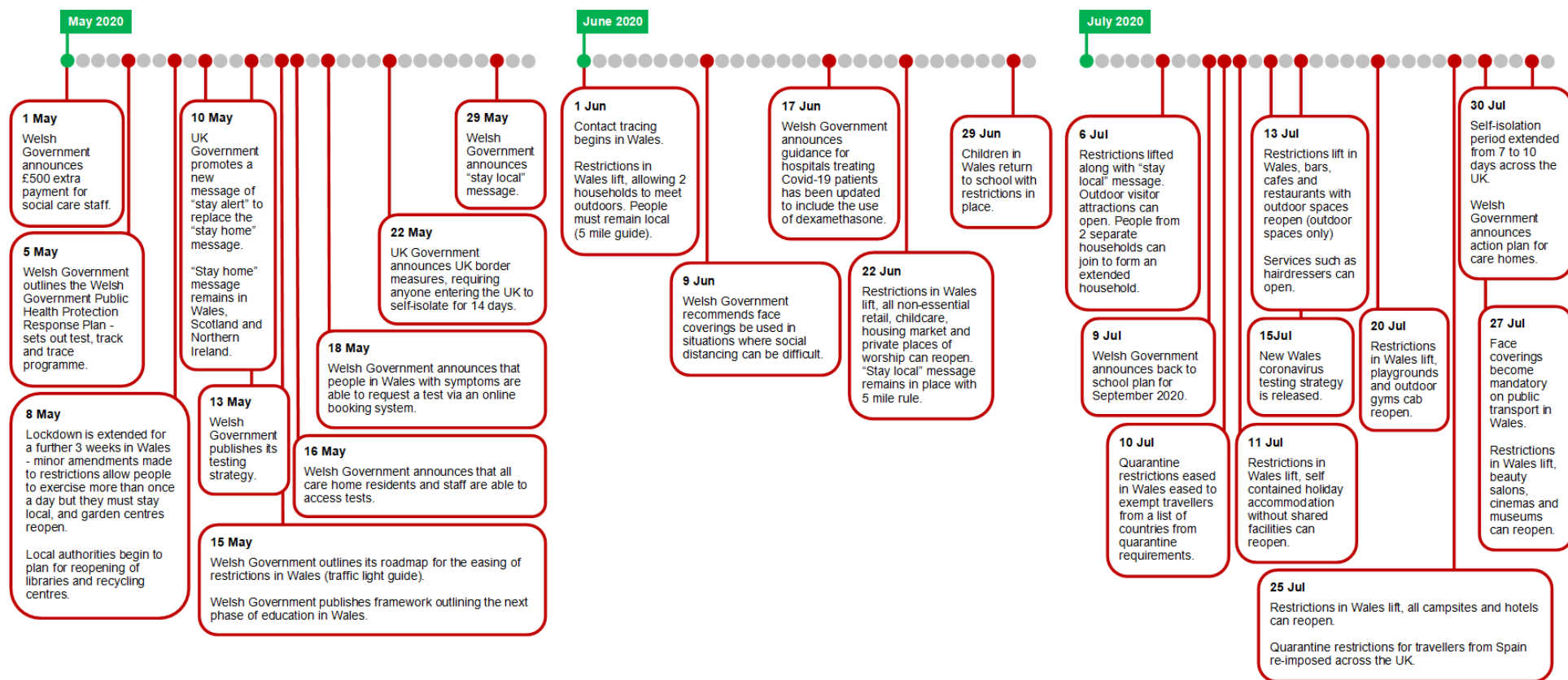
**Figure 3:** Timeline of key events in the UK government's response to COVID-19, 31<sup>st</sup> January to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020, support for health and social care (National Audit Office, 2020)



**Figure 4:** Timeline of key events in the UK government's response to COVID-19, 31<sup>st</sup> January to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020, support business, individuals and other public services / wider emergency response (National Audit Office, 2020)

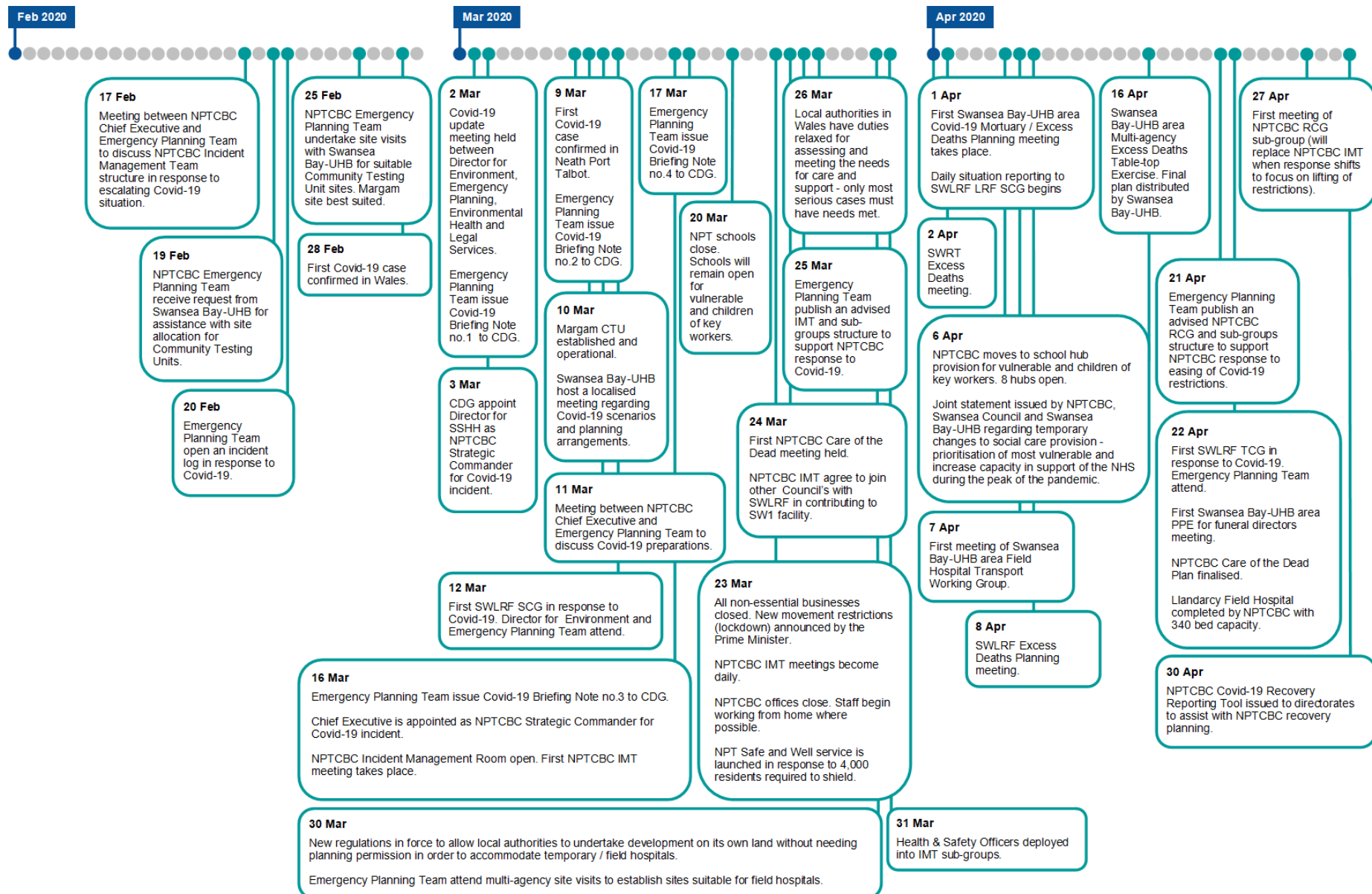


**Figure 5:** Timeline of key events in the Welsh Government's response to COVID-19, 31<sup>st</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 (Senedd Research, 2020)



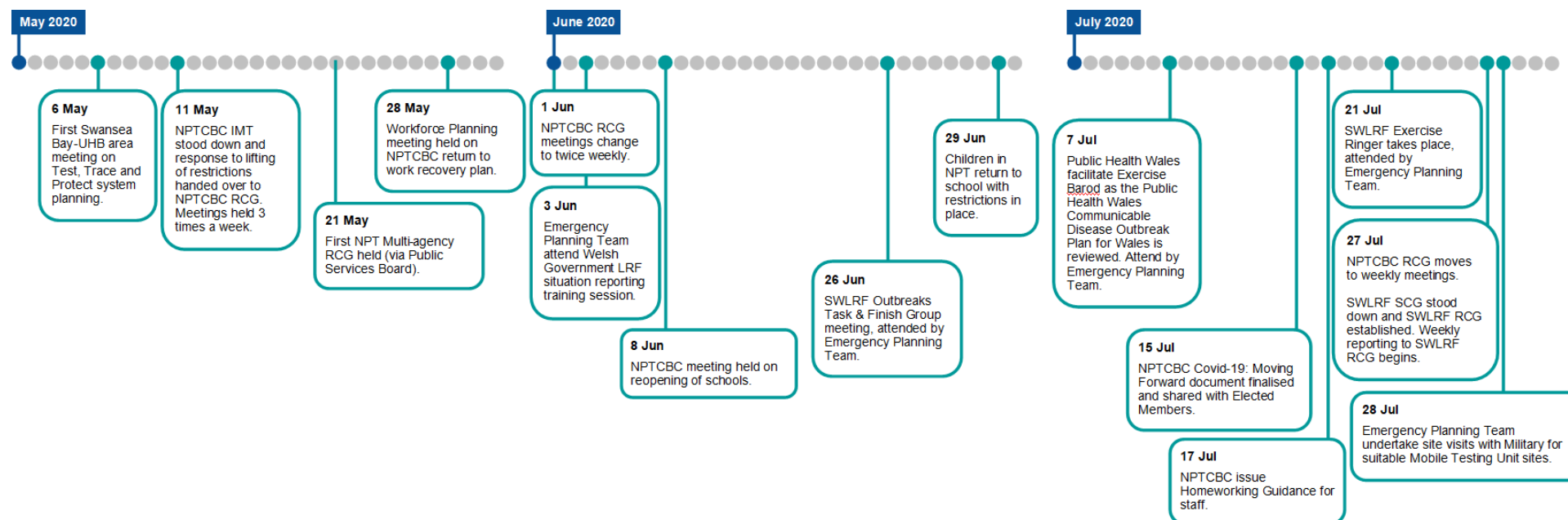
**Figure 5 (continued):** Timeline of key events in the Welsh Government's response to COVID-19, 31<sup>st</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 (Senedd Research, 2020)





**Figure 6:** Timeline of key events in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council response to COVID-19, 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 (abbreviations can be found on page 15)





### Abbreviations:

<b>CDG</b>	Corporate Directors Group
<b>CTU</b>	Community Testing Unit
<b>IMR</b>	Incident Management Room
<b>IMT</b>	Incident Management Team
<b>NPT</b>	Neath Port Talbot
<b>NPTCBC</b>	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

<b>RCG</b>	Recovery Coordination Group
<b>SCG</b>	Strategic Coordination Group
<b>SWLRF</b>	South Wales Local Resilience Forum
<b>SWRT</b>	South Wales Local Resilience Team
<b>TCG</b>	Tactical Coordination Group
<b>UHB</b>	University Health Board

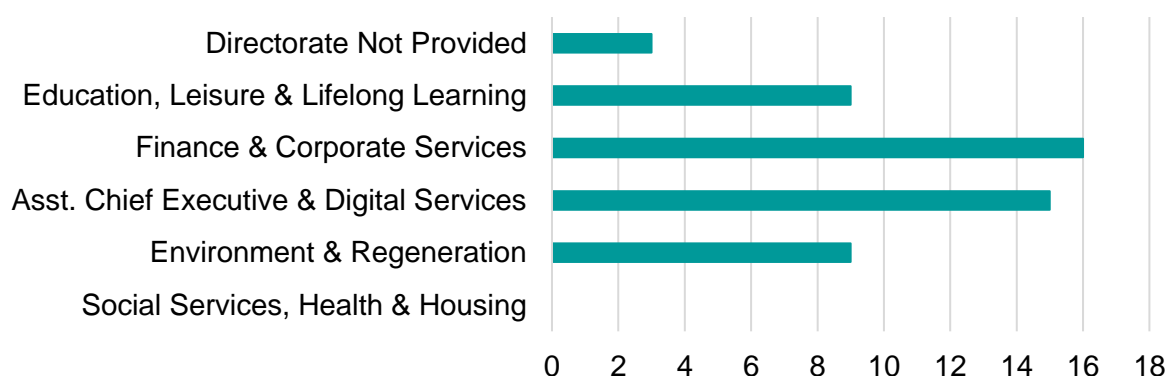
**Figure 6 (continued):** Timeline of key events in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council response to COVID-19, 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

### 3. Incident Debrief

#### 3.1. Operational Level Incident Debrief

The debrief survey issued to Council Officers involved in the operational level of the response to Covid-19 received 52 responses. It should be noted that all directorates participated in this debrief, except for the Social Services Health and Housing directorate. The table below shows the breakdown of responses per directorate:

**Table 1:** Breakdown of operational survey responses per NPTCBC directorate.



All persons were informed of the ethics of the debrief process. For ease of cross referencing comments, observations and recommendations, all responders were given a number which also provides anonymity to participants. Participants of the operational debrief survey were asked to share their views of the Council's response to Covid-19 via the following questions:

1. What went well during the Covid-19 incident?
2. What did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
3. How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

All responses from NPTCBC Officers involved in the operational level of response to Covid-19 can be found on pages 14 - 30. In summary, NPTCBC Officers involved with the operational level of the response to Covid-19 felt there was an improved team atmosphere across the local authority, and levels of communication were good or had improved. Staff also felt that the ability to work from home was beneficial throughout the incident for reasons such as improved collaboration with other Council Services and that services suffered minimal disruption during the prolonged nature of the incident. On the other hand, NPTCBC Officers involved with the operational level of the response to Covid-19 felt there was poor communication during aspects of the response, which caused issues such as poor communication from the Government, duplication of work and confusion over roles and responsibilities. Officers felt that they struggled with workloads and work-life balance, with caused mental health and well-being issues such as stress and a loss of time with their families during a stressful period. Additionally, Officers felt that ICT provision was poor, with poor connections and equipment being the main issue. All

recommendations have been recorded in [section 3.1.3](#) and are reflected within the NPTCBC Covid-19 Incident Forward Action Plan.

### 3.1.1. Operational response staff view on what went well during the Covid-19 incident

What went well during the Covid-19 incident?	Identified by:	Comments:
Food Distribution Hub	1,11,26,30,34,43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This included the establishment, management, running and monitoring of the hub</li> </ul>
Learning new skills	2,4	
Continued maintaining of services and delivering work whilst under pressure services under pressure	2,7,17,30,42,44	
Meeting new people	2,4,32	
A stronger and/or improved team atmosphere across the Council	1,2,4,9,12,13,14,15,16,18,19,22,25,28,30,34,35,40,43,44,45,46,48,51,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers reported an increase in team working, collaborating with other teams, and better support amongst colleagues</li> <li>Decisions could be made rapidly due to range of skills brought together.</li> <li>Teams able to work more efficiently due to improved team / cross service working.</li> <li>Daily team briefings, weekly meetings, one to one meetings etc. taken place in a number of services and more frequent than before.</li> <li>Increased joint working</li> <li>Communications and Marketing Teams worked well in a collaborative manner – made work more efficient.</li> </ul>
Good / improved levels of communication	1,2,4,5,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16,18,19,22,25,28,29,34,36,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good communication with Senior Management and Cabinet Members through daily / weekly meetings.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved communications between Officers and elected members</li> <li>• Clearly defining tasks to officers / services ensured efficiency</li> <li>• Responsiveness of social media communications to public enquiries</li> <li>• As a result of the emergency situation, social media messages did not need to be issued in Welsh so improved communications efficiency</li> <li>• Having joint / multi-agency communications in place</li> </ul>
Staff worked extremely hard	2,17,35,40	
The sub-groups supporting the NPTCBC Incident Management Team	3,5,15,16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response sub-group meetings helped improve communication of information.</li> <li>• Having response sub-groups with mixed services improved response, efficiency and collaboration.</li> <li>• Decisions could be made rapidly due to range of skills brought together.</li> <li>• Teams able to work more efficiently due to improved team / cross service working</li> </ul>
Multi-agency working / maintained multi-agency working	27,30,48,51	
NPTCBC Covid-19 debrief surveys	3	
Multi-agency debrief	3	
Having pre-existing plans in place beforehand to aid preparedness	5,37	

Daily meetings with Senior Management (Director level) and close links to the NPTCBC Incident Management Team	5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabled staff to have the most recent information in a timely manner</li> </ul>
Ability to work from home	5,7,12,16,18,29,38,39,43,47,48,49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabled collaboration across services</li> <li>Limited disruption to services.</li> <li>Proved to be an effective way of working.</li> <li>Remote meetings have saved the need to travel.</li> <li>Getting majority of staff working remotely when previously no one did this.</li> <li>Ability to arrange meetings and solve problems virtually.</li> </ul>
Records managed	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The situation enabled us to update records</li> </ul>
Daily bulletins from Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided updates on latest announcements from Welsh Government</li> </ul>
Mobilisation of staff to address the emergency	10,17,22,30,35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers stepped up a level to respond to the emergency</li> <li>Staff remained professional throughout</li> </ul>
Staff redeployment	4,7,10,29,30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers from others of the Council stepped in to help</li> </ul>
Support offered and provided by Emergency Planning and Health & Safety Teams	9	
Lots of volunteers across the Council and public for supporting temporary / new services	10,11,30,31,32,33,43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with public allowed identification of vulnerabilities that may have gone unnoticed.</li> </ul>
Staff work rotas	13	
Improved working time flexibility	13,49	
Council support to residents	17,18,34,43	

ICT support	20,21,29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and support for ICT was excellent</li> </ul>
Ability to migrate services to a remote set up quickly.	20,23,38,39	
Community organisations supporting communities	34	
Decision making	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick decisions / responses from both Senior Management and Managers allowed home working to happen efficiently.</li> </ul>
Collaborative working with businesses	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses complying with relevant guidance.</li> <li>• Dissemination of information / advice (e.g. preventative measures) to businesses and care homes</li> </ul>
Maintaining limited transport services for the public for vulnerable children / children of key workers	43	

### 3.1.2. Operational response staff view on what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident

What did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?	Identified by:	Comments:
Communication	1,5,7,8,12,16,17,21,24,26,29,30,39,41,42,44,45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication between the different teams at the Food Distribution Hub was sometimes a challenge and caused confusion.</li> <li>• The difference in messages between UK and Welsh Governments made communications more difficult. The</li> </ul>



		<p>frequency of changes to lockdown guidance has also proved quite challenging to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information coming through from Welsh Government was on occasions conflicting or slow</li> <li>• Sign-off procedures were immediate during early phase of the pandemic, but as gradually returned to taking longer – provides a bottleneck due to the need for Welsh translations.</li> <li>• More consideration is needed for those who are digitally excluded and how we can communicate with them better (residents and staff raised this)</li> <li>• Timeliness of responses to the public around key updates and the co-ordination</li> <li>• Communication with management.</li> <li>• Lots of different messages and lack of instruction.</li> <li>• Initial confusion</li> <li>• A number of the roles overlapped with some uncertainty as to who was doing what</li> <li>• Roles of Council Services / Officers became confused and fragmented (e.g. enforcement)</li> <li>• Lack of communication with staff from managers in substantive role at the early stages of crisis - required to understand what staff concerns were about working from home (e.g. not enough work, space to work etc.)</li> <li>• Lack of clarity about what could be funded,</li> <li>• Duplication of information requested in the various returns</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange of information could have been better with centralised intelligence and data collation – felt like we were working in silos</li> <li>• Confusion regarding what we should or shouldn't be doing</li> <li>• The public knew about the rates relief, grants etc. before the Council so were unable to fully prepare before the scheme went live.</li> <li>• Speed of onset of lockdown (not communicated well from Government)</li> </ul>
Redeployment	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard joining a new service in the beginning due to the intensity of the situation</li> </ul>
New employees	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult for new employees to learn new procedures, rules etc. - situation was made worse due to the amount of public applications for assistance</li> </ul>
Delays in Welsh Government Shielding letters	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made it difficult to formulate a response in advance</li> </ul>
Food Distribution Hub	1,11,22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many people were involved and different people being asked to cover the same role at different times.</li> <li>• Would have been more beneficial for Welsh Government to supply a budget to the Council rather than food boxes, as this would have been more efficient in both cost and deliveries.</li> <li>• Food Distribution Hub should have had more input in the database that was set up – data such as what has been distributed was held on a spreadsheet, when it surely could have been saved on the database too</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The service and service users would probably have benefitted further if we had taken a little more time to plan the service. If the objectives and target recipients had been clearer initially, service delivery would have been easier and the evaluation of the service effectiveness would have been more straight-forward.</li> </ul>
Working from home	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be difficult at times due to family life</li> <li>Video calling not always being good quality as connections would fluctuate</li> </ul>
School Hubs	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents not picking up food bags for their children, as a result some school staff delivered the food bags to homes.</li> </ul>
Management of workloads, work-life balance, mental health and well-being	15,23,28,31,45,46,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes became difficult to manage workloads</li> <li>As public sector employees we should (and did) rise to the task but all of this was happening at the same time as trying to adjust our home lives to lockdown too. This was a little stressful for a period of time.</li> <li>Work was not issued fairly. Some staff had a lot of time at home unable or unwilling to work due to child care, shielding or fear of the virus, or not being issued work etc. and other staff were issued or involved in work which kept them busy. For some staff the only time they had off during the Covid-19 incident was when they booked annual leave but for other staff they had days, weeks or months off work to spend quality time with their family as they were unwilling or unable to work as mentioned above.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long working days and weekends due to volume of work and pressure of time (e.g. time sensitive support to public, businesses, delivery of Covid-19 Regulations, enforcement etc.)</li> <li>• The authority taking away employee right to build and use flexi and then backtracking</li> <li>• Some of the calls were very hard to deal with. We spoke to people whose family members had died people, whose cancer had become terminal due to the lockdown</li> </ul>
Service level pre-planning	8,18,20,48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No single point of contact for each service or lists of contacts provided to frontline services, made work less efficient and cause Heads of Services to respond to queries.</li> <li>• A lot of procedures had to be developed and implemented very quickly on a case by case basis. Service response felt very reactive in the early days of the lockdown.</li> <li>• Being unprepared for shutdown, in particular with regards to ensuring everyone was set-up for home working / laptops etc.</li> <li>• Training in advance would have better prepared us for the task</li> </ul>
ICT provision	16,19,36,43,46,47,48,49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially ICT provision was poor</li> <li>• Although ICT were supportive, during the first few weeks of the lockdown it was very difficult communicating with members, trying to get them set up on Microsoft Teams, and to ensure they had the correct ICT equipment –</li> </ul>

		<p>particularly when Council Officers were also trying to get used to using the new systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor ICT equipment</li> <li>• Slow services</li> <li>• Difficulties connecting to NPT servers.</li> <li>• Microsoft Teams on occasions has lost connection, with users being unable to reconnect</li> <li>• ICT used to work from home was not of the standard as that used in the office.</li> <li>• Being unprepared for shutdown, in particular with regards to ensuring everyone was set-up for home working / laptops etc.</li> <li>• Occasional problems with internet access.</li> </ul>
Safe and Well Service	25,27,30,32,33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial interview at call centre focused primarily on food delivery and not the needs of referral and family.</li> <li>• Confusion as to remit of Safe and Well in the early stages was expected, but as employee this was challenging. Initially, Elected Members thought Safe and Well replaced the work of the Local Area Coordination Co-ordinators so they were asking things outside of the remit of Safe and Well. Also Safe and Well wasn't put in place as a financial support tool - some organisations referred people to us for financial support rather than health support</li> <li>• The success rate of calling volunteers was low and the demand for placing of the volunteers was also lower than expected</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More time needed to implement Safe and Well</li> <li>• Capacity of some organisations to help - although the will was there</li> <li>• Not having the time to set up formal programme management methodologies - an appropriate methodology for use whilst responding in a crisis would have helped in particular in identifying and understanding the various roles / responsibilities involved in setting up and delivering a service of this size</li> </ul>
Resourcing and procurement	35,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing advice around such items as chemicals, PPE etc.</li> <li>• Procurement of key items was a challenge at the start but this was country wide. NPTCBC used to have a designated store in Facilities but due to cutbacks this was given up and suppliers were tendered on delivering direct to site. The lack of any in-house stock did cause some issues.</li> <li>• Due to resource shortages, Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff were put under pressure to deliver response to Covid-19 Regulations and enforcement 7 days a week.</li> </ul>
Decision making	36,45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow response to close the offices.</li> <li>• Speed of onset of lockdown (Government level)</li> </ul>
Support / gratitude from Human Resources / Senior Management	23,37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPTCBCs Covid-19 FAQs for staff and managers felt very vague – it felt like all decisions were left in the hands of accountable managers, where Council wide policies should have been looked at from the very</li> </ul>

		<p>beginning. Human Resources and/or Senior Management did not wish to be drawn on these matters, which resulted in different policies being adopted in different sections / departments / directorates (e.g. relating to flexi rules).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No gratitude shown at all by Senior Management, just empty words. Large amounts of Council Officers have not been working at all, whilst still receiving full pay. A number of Council Services saw increased workloads with little thanks or reward (e.g. additional annual leave etc.)</li> </ul>
Field hospitals	51,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intensity and speed was difficult to sustain but that was the nature of the project, and thankfully the term required was short.</li> <li>• There was no feedback to the team directly delivering the project from the response team</li> <li>• Instructions to proceed were slow and impacted on the delivery of the project.</li> <li>• There has been a detrimental impact on the existing users of the Llandarcy facility due to the conversion, and even after sports and gym facilities have been given the go-ahead to reconvene business, the Llandarcy set up will be a long way behind due to the reinstatement works required.</li> <li>• Definition and planning of the work required</li> </ul>
Lack of awareness regarding the Incident Management Team	51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unaware NPTCBC had an Incident Management Team</li> </ul>



### 3.1.3. Operational response staff recommendations on how to improve NPTCBCs future response to emergencies

How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?	Identified by:	Comments:
Communication	1,3,7,12,16,30,37,38,41,51,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More communication across teams and departments</li> <li>• Remind staff involved in the response that communication is key and review communication frequently</li> <li>• Ensure the right people are involved (e.g. meetings, updates, information sharing etc.)</li> <li>• More joined up services and better information sharing between departments</li> <li>• Look at how staff can be made more aware of other Council Services and what those services do (a lot of staff don't realise what services are in the Council)</li> <li>• In addition to keeping the public up to date, ensure staff are kept up to date.</li> <li>• More consideration is needed for those who are digitally excluded and how we can communicate with them better (residents and staff raised this)</li> <li>• Communicate to staff what emergency plans have been implemented during an emergency response.</li> <li>• Communicate the role of the Council during an emergency as well as the role of groups such as the Incident Management Team</li> <li>• Provide feedback to staff involved in the response.</li> </ul>
Team work	2,12,16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasise the importance of team work</li> <li>• Look for further opportunities to develop multi-disciplinary and corporate working</li> <li>• More joined up services</li> </ul>

Working from home	2,13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing staff to work from home helps us feel appreciated and trusted</li> <li>• Being more prepared for more home working</li> </ul>
Welsh language	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a communications plan in place for Welsh Language during emergencies so Welsh social media accounts don't get left behind</li> </ul>
Participate in Emergency Planning exercises	5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would be useful from a communications point of view</li> <li>• Enable services to be better prepared</li> </ul>
Microsoft Teams	5,10,29,33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued use of Microsoft Teams as a part of the response to Covid-19 outbreaks and other emergencies</li> <li>• Ensure all services are available via Microsoft Teams</li> <li>• Speeds up the response</li> </ul>
Staff planning / redeployment	1,8,11,25,26,30,32,43,50,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the amount of people involved in new services such as the Food Distribution Hub – keep the same people in post for the duration to avoid confusion</li> <li>• In anticipation of a second peak, consider early indication to Officers who may be required to perform a different role</li> <li>• Consider using the Officers who were redeployed in the same role as before if further response to future outbreaks is needed</li> <li>• Spent more time formalising roles and responsibilities at the beginning of an emergency where possible</li> <li>• Clearly define roles for individuals rather than have multiple people doing bits of the same role.</li> <li>• Offer training to Officers so that if they are required to be involved in future emergencies they can be redeployed more easily (e.g. phone call handling, manual handling etc).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider redeploying staff fully rather than having them split between their business as usual role and redeployed role.</li> <li>• Identify staff early who could be proactive in an emergency.</li> <li>• Skills mapping of staff</li> <li>• Procedures and policy to redeploy the correct staff at the correct time.</li> </ul>
More guidance and training	8,30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider some training notes / guidance to help Officers understand what is expected to improve preparedness</li> <li>• Offer training to Officers so that if they are required to be involved in future emergencies they can be redeployed more easily.</li> </ul>
Emergency preparedness	12,14,15,18,25,31,37,43,50,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the right people are involved (e.g. meetings, updates, information sharing etc.)</li> <li>• Use the previous response to Covid-19 to build the future response</li> <li>• Formalise the process of identifying the groups who will be brought together to form the response, as well as the roles that they would be allocated to</li> <li>• Identify a single person of contact (and deputy) per service and provide a list given to front line services to save time and perhaps free heads of service up from queries.</li> <li>• Consider setting up response roles based on service areas (e.g. one service take responsibility for Track and Trace)</li> <li>• Emphasis importance of emergency planning</li> <li>• Identify staff early who could be proactive in an emergency.</li> <li>• Skills mapping of staff</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures and policy to redeploy the correct staff at the correct time.</li> <li>• Set up formal programme management methodology for use whilst responding in a emergency would have helped, particularly in identifying and understanding the various roles / responsibilities involved in setting up and delivering a large new service (e.g. Safe and Well Service)</li> </ul>
Business continuity	18,20,43,47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a single person of contact (and deputy) per service and provide a list given to front line services to save time and perhaps free heads of service up from queries.</li> <li>• Have a cohesive plan in place for a given set of circumstances</li> <li>• Identify staff early who could be proactive in an emergency.</li> <li>• Ensure services plan for full office closures / closures of all offices at the same time</li> </ul>
Learning from the emergency	17,21,30,33,34,37,43,48,49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure there is learning from the Covid-19 emergency</li> <li>• Build on the lessons learnt</li> <li>• Carry out debrief sessions for Incident Management Team sub-groups to look at how the work done by those groups could have been improved</li> <li>• A lessons learnt workshop should be carried out as what is required on the frontline does not sometimes working with what is expected by the back office</li> </ul>
Emergency response	12,19,22,24,25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the right people are involved (e.g. meetings, updates, information sharing etc.)</li> <li>• Prioritise most important tasks</li> <li>• Identify key leads for certain elements from the start</li> <li>• Have clear deliverables for different areas of the response</li> </ul>

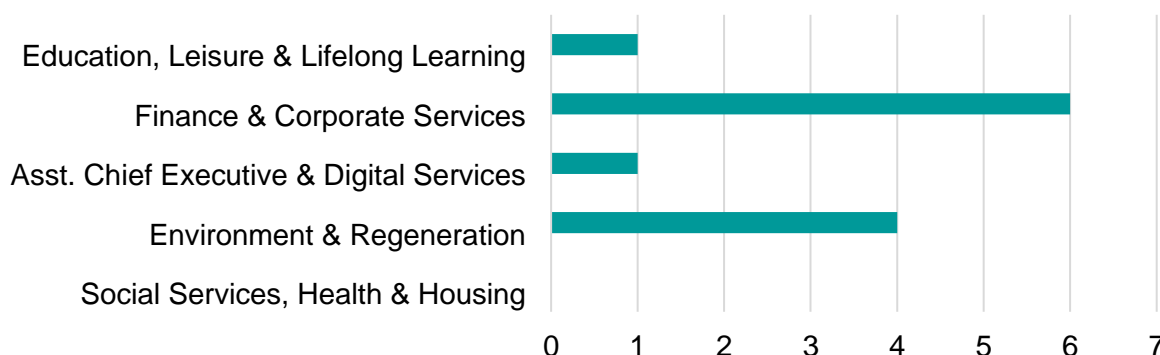
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the same people involved to ensure consistency where possible</li> <li>• Communications needs to be on agendas at the start of emergencies as communications staff can prevent issues becoming too big</li> <li>• Spent more time formalising roles and responsibilities at the beginning of an emergency where possible</li> </ul>
Staff rewards	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reward staff who worked hard through the incident – this will improve motivation, encourage staff to volunteer more during emergencies and encourage staff to go the extra mile in future emergencies</li> </ul>
Integration of relevant services	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider integration of relevant services where teams worked well together as part of a multi-disciplinary team (e.g. Communications and Marketing)</li> </ul>
Safe and Well Service	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More structured information to be taken during referral interview, to include; emergency contact number, specialist agency involvement, details of family members and their needs)</li> </ul>
Supporting the public	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closer with communities and Elected Members to support community response in a coordinated way</li> </ul>
Response timeframes	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More time needed to implement projects such as Safe and Well, the field hospitals</li> </ul>
Resources and procurement	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better resilience in stock levels of cleaning products, PPE etc.</li> </ul>
ICT support and equipment	36,46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update ICT servers</li> <li>• Provide all staff with laptops to aid remote working</li> <li>• Make work paperless to limit the need to attend offices</li> <li>• Improved ICT facilities</li> </ul>
Funding	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity early on regarding what additional costs will be funded by Welsh Government</li> </ul>

Human Resources policies	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have policies in place regarding flexi, annual leave, childcare issues etc. in place ready for future emergencies – constant changes throughout Covid-19 incident put additional pressure on staff</li> <li>• Have policies in place for what managers should be doing with their staff such as homeworking, office access, rotas, team meetings, supervision, contactable hours (for staff and managers)</li> <li>• Be more clear early on when offices close and ensure staff do not attend the offices – the slow response to home working put staff at risk</li> </ul>
Field hospital	51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early consideration to the reinstatement of the Llandarcy facility should have been done. Should be taken into account for future emergencies.</li> <li>• Plans for the reinstatement of the Llandarcy facility should go ahead and should be funded through Covid-19 funds, or a reimbursement option should be offered due to the lack of access for the users.</li> </ul>

### 3.2. Tactical Level Incident Debrief

The debrief survey issued to Council Officers involved in the tactical level of the response to Covid-19 received 12 responses. It should be noted that all directorates participated in this debrief, except for the Social Services Health and Housing directorate. The table below shows the breakdown of responses per directorate:

**Table 2:** Breakdown of tactical survey responses per NPTCBC directorate.



All persons were informed of the ethics of the debrief process. Participants of the tactical debrief survey were asked to share their views of the Council's response to Covid-19 via the following questions:

1. What went well during the Covid-19 incident?
2. What did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
3. How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

#### 3.2.1 What went well during the Covid-19 incident?

The Incident Management Team was established on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 on the advice of the Emergency Planning Team, as part of the Council's early response to Covid-19, and subsequently led to the quick establishment of relevant sub-groups, which led to new, temporary services such as NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub being set up quickly and efficiently in response to Covid-19. Tactical Officers felt the use of an Incident Management Team, and its early establishment, was beneficial in the Council's response to Covid-19, as it brought together corporate level management to oversee decision making, and enabled the establishment of relevant sub-groups based on advisory structures developed by the Emergency Planning Team, containing Council Officers who had the relevant knowledge to undertake the response. Tactical Officers felt that the setting up of the sub-group structure was important as it ensured the Council's response was organised, that the correct people were involved in the Council's response to Covid-19, and ensured Officers who were able to make decisions could do so at short notice without any barriers in place. Tactical Officers also felt that those involved in the sub-group structure, both at a tactical and operational level, showed great commitment throughout the response and in getting operational activities established and running (e.g. NPT Safe and Well, Food Distribution Hub, Field Hospital, School Hubs, Care of the Dead etc). Also noted by

Tactical Officers was the benefit of having access to the Emergency Planning Team for tactical level advice throughout the incident, as well as having the Emergency Planning Team attend the SWLRF Tactical Coordination Group and other relevant tactical level multi-agency groups to provide feedback, guidance and to coordinate the relevant actions placed on the Council. In support of the Incident Managements Team's response to Covid-19, the Emergency Planning Team also developed a number of tools, such as the NPTCBC Recovery Reporting Tool and the NPTCBC Traffic Light Tracking Tool, to aid the Council's response to Covid-19 and to plan for the recovery phase.

Tactical Offices noted the quick response by the Council to set up new services such as NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub, which helped to meet the needs of 1,300 residents across Neath Port Talbot who were required to shield from Covid-19 or self-isolate. It should be noted that services such as these were supported by staff who had been redeployed (e.g. redeployment of Community Transport Service). Officers who volunteered or were redeployed were highly supportive and enthusiastic, and worked well as a team. Debrief participants also noted how quickly the Council responded to the requirement to establish Llandarcy Field Hospital in 22 days. It was also noted that the production and auctioning of a detailed Care of the Dead Plan in collaboration with Crematorium Services went well.

Throughout the incident, Tactical Officers felt that there was good communication at all levels throughout the Council, which enabled those involved in the Incident Management Team and the sub-group structure to understand their specific roles and to appreciate and target problem areas within the response. This helped to improve the interface with the public and between internal officers, frontline workers and volunteers. In relation to public communications, Tactical Officers felt that communications was good and that extending the working hours of the Communications Team supported the good level of public communications. The Mailroom has also been important in supporting public communications throughout the response to Covid-19, handling an increased amount in ingoing and outgoing mail as a result of NPT Safe and Well, whilst also recommencing a courier service to Elected Members to assist in participation of remote meetings, and by assisting other Council Services by operating a remote printing service which printed materials subsequently posted to the relevant Officers. There has also been good communication between NPTCBC and the Trade Unions via the use of remote meetings, which ensured regular information sharing as well as providing a forum for discussion and resolving an issues raised by the Trade Unions. There was also good work carried out by Democratic Services who quickly developed an online version of 'Urgency Action Protocol', set up regular contact with all Elected Members and supported the Council Leader in regular briefings with the Cabinet and Opposition Leader.

Many Tactical Officers agreed that the support provided by Digital Services enabled Council Services to quickly move to home working and limited overall Service disruption. This included supporting the Finance Teams with developing online application processes and databases, supporting Legal Teams with developing online processes for birth registration, virtual knowledge tests for drivers, taxi renewals, applications under the Licensing Act 2003 etc. and by supporting Human Resources



Teams with developing processes for workforce audits and staff redeployment planning. Microsoft Teams has also been of benefit in the view of Tactical Officers, as it has allowed Council Services to function relatively normally, and enabled Services to pull resources together more easily across the Council.

Tactical Officers noted the support provided by Financial Services during the incident, stating that Financial Services supported Service Managers with making payments for Covid-19 related expenditure. Financial Services responsible throughout the incident for preparing monthly claims for reimbursement from Welsh Government, preparing projected estimates of additional costs and loss of income, ensuring staff and creditors were continued to be paid on time, and profiling instalment payments for Council Tax. Tactical Officers also praised the work of Financial Services for processing £8.8 million of relief to over 700 National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Accounts, for managing the payments of the £10,000 and £25,000 grants to eligible businesses and charities (as of 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020, £27.84 million has been paid out to 2,432 businesses and charities in Neath Port Talbot). The majority of the Internal Audit Team were redeployed to the Test, Trace and Protect Service from June 2020, but prior to this the team provided advice and guidance to other Council Services regarding new ways of working.

Tactical Officers agreed that the enforcement work carried out by the Council under the new powers provided under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) Wales 2020 was good, as Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers ensured buildings were made compliant to the regulations and ensured town centre mitigation was in place. It was also noted through the debrief responses that there was a consistent approach to enforcement and clarity was achieved across all of the Council's regulatory functions, as information relating to issues and complaints was shared and discussed across Enforcement Offices on a weekly basis. There was also ongoing support and advice provided by Legal Services in relation to enforcement issues as a result of relevant Covid-19 restrictions.

Legal Services also played an important role throughout the Council's response to Covid-19 by providing legal advice on enforcement issues under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) Wales 2020, and legal advice in respect of social service provision as changes were made by both the UK and Welsh Governments (adult social care and homelessness strategies), providing advice on redeployment matters and furloughing of staff, on school closures and reopening of schools, providing advice on closures of public rights of way, debt recovery, data protection and freedom of information requests, data sharing advice across other organisations (e.g. between NPTCBC and Public Health Wales etc.), advice on PPE sourcing and procuring, as well as liaising with Welsh Government regarding the approval of PPE suppliers, providing legal and transactional advice and assistance on emergency projects such as Llandarcy Field Hospital, and managing the cancellation of marriage / civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies. Whilst responding to Covid-19, Legal Services have also continued to provide services in regards to Council litigation, contentious issues, property transactions, complaints, land charge searches, taxi renewal applications, street trading licences, birth registrations, safeguarding surgeries between Legal Services and Social Services, continued processing of

safeguarding cases within statutory time frames, with Legal Services working to develop remote access systems in response to Covid-19 to ensure business as usual work, such as those noted, can continue. Legal Services have also been support Digital Services in ensuring compliance with data protection and information governance due to increased / new use of software and technology across the Council. As of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020, there has been extremely good compliance with data protection laws, with no breach reports being submitted to the Information Commissions Office.

Human Resources has been involved across areas of the Council's response to Covid-19 in relation to staffing issues. The Workforce Planning Group increased its meeting frequency and ensured participation of all directorates and Trade Unions, which enabled the Human Resources Teams to plan workforce strategies and ensured all directorates had a framework for providing workforce data. In addition to this, a Workplaces Group was also established, to ensure processes were in place for ensuring safe working practises for Council Officers who have worked throughout the incident, either from home or from Offices, and for Officers returning to workplaces. A Mental Health and Wellbeing Group was also established to develop mental health and wellbeing resources for employees. Much of the ongoing work to protect Council Officers was supported by the Health and Safety Team who provided health and safety advice and guidance, and who ensured processes where in place for carrying out Covid-19 related risk assessments. The Training and Development Team also focused on the delivery of training to support redeployment of staff and staff involved in frontline work, for services such as Social Services, NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub.

Tactical Officers also noted that continuing with 'business as usual' services went well, as services such as Household Refuse and Recycling, Highways and Buildings, Legal and Financial services and provision, Human Resources and Payroll, Community Safety work on Anti-Social Behaviour etc. were maintained throughout the incident.

Tactical Officers also felt that multi-agency working went well with agencies such as South Wales Police and Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

### **3.2.2 What did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?**

Tactical Officers reported a number of issues via the debrief surveys. The first issue noted by Tactical Officers was that of Council Officer health and wellbeing. Many Officers were required to work extremely long hours throughout the response phase of the incident, with limited breaks or time off, and some Officers involved in the management side of the incident also worked through weekends and bank holidays. There was also issues due to the quick onset of office closures and the requirement for staff to work from home, with staff not having the appropriate DSE they normally have in the office, such as adjustable chairs, screens, arm rests etc.

Some Tactical Officers felt there were some challenges during the initial response phase to Covid-19, as partial redeployment of Officers resulted in a high changeover of Officers, which consequently resulted in communications issues. It was also felt that there were issues with staff being pulled out of their redeployed roles back into their

'business as usual' roles before the response phase had finished. Additionally, issues were raised with some Council Officers not being able to work from home initially, partially as a result of some Officers being on the shielding list, and others needing to provide support to dependents.

ICT issues were reported by a number of Tactical Officers, such as not all Council Officers being able to work from home as not all Officers had received laptops yet, which resulted in some Officers taking desktop computers home. It was also reported that some Officers were unable to work as they did not have Wi-Fi in their homes. Tactical Officers also felt that the ICT systems struggled initially with the sheer volume of Officers working from home, which resulted in frequent loss of connections, however this significantly improved as the incident progressed.

Many respondents felt there were issues with liaising with Welsh Government or with the level of communication from Welsh Government. Tactical Officers felt that the guidance coming from Welsh Government was often too late, unclear, and contradictory or did not contain enough information to support restrictions or changes to restrictions. In relation to legislation and policy, changes were being varied and amended on a regular basis with short notice as to the extent of the changes. Officers also reported issues with the late announcements by Welsh Government in relation to financial support and guidance on grants, including identifying eligibility to grants, delay in allowing grants to be paid to charities, what costs could be recovered, how to recover costs, will income loss be funded etc. Local authorities are also still waiting on clarity on from Welsh Government regarding what funding will be available to recover costs and support the ongoing response. It was also felt that the Council do not have sufficient resources to deal with the issues prolonged incidents such as Covid-19 bring about.

There were also issues reported in relation to NPT Safe and Well and the Food Distribution Hub in relation to who had the authority to make the food order, and what level of budget was available from within existing resources to support the order. It was also unclear whether the Welsh Government would reimburse the Council for the food supplied to residents not on the Welsh Government shielded list. It was also raised that it was difficult to track the corporate database when establishing requirements for the food orders, and that the assessment criteria initially was not developed enough to field genuine requests for support – this improved as the assessment criteria developed.

Tactical Officers raised issues regarding the prioritisation of requests from front line services. There were some instances where a front line service would place a request, another service would provide support and then find out the support was no longer required after putting resources in place to deal with the request, which resulted in supporting services being substantially distracted from other response requirements.

Tactical Officers felt that working with multi-agency partners in some instances did not work well, as communications between agencies could be difficult. For example, Public Health Wales did not participate in the SWLRF Tactical or Strategic Coordination Groups, and did not act as the lead agency / agency with primacy over the incident, and communication with the local health board could be difficult at times

due to the varying levels of pressure and demand on the NHS. Tactical Officers also reported that although there were regional and/or national groups established to look at issues such as excess deaths and waste management which generally worked well, there appeared to be issues in regional communications and arriving at clear, consistent approaches, with some agencies appearing to have more knowledge than others and not sharing the information (notwithstanding the issues surrounding PPE). Issues were also raised with attempts to work with the voluntary sector, with concerns these issues will continue into the future.

Additionally, issues were raised at the tactical level regarding the situation reporting from the Council to SWLRF, and subsequently Welsh Government. It was raised that the Incident Management Team were not updating the situation report enough, which resulted in information, issues and BRAG ratings remaining the same for long periods of time, often unnecessarily. Tactical Officers also raised that some Council Officers did not appear to initially realise the significance of the incident, and that some officers were reluctant to take on the incident roles required of them based on their usual roles and responsibilities. There were also issues regarding Council Officers not understanding emergency planning terms and processes, and this could be improved with increased attendance at relevant training and exercises.

### **3.2.3 How can the local authority's response to emergency, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?**

Tactical Officers listed a number of recommendations for improvements to incident response, with one key recommendation to ensure ICT connectivity improves to support home working in the event of future lockdowns in relation to Covid-19. Alongside this, it was felt that the Council needs to ensure it has robust business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place for each Council Service, especially in respect of ICT.

Tactical Officers would like to see increased engagement with Welsh Government (and the UK Government) in order to have earlier notification of potential changes to legislation in relation to Covid-19, prior to decisions on such changes being made public. This recommendation should also apply to decisions around funding. It was also felt that the Government should look to improve its communication with other public bodies, and communication with the public to increase trust.

Another recommendation is to ensure any future responses to Covid-19 with a multi-agency setting should be coordinated between agencies, ensuring that a response is coordinated before it is communicated to any third parties involved in incident response. It was also felt that the joint policy currently in place between South Wales Police and other enforcement agencies should be kept to ensure a consistent approach. Additionally, any future response to Covid-19 should ensure the right agency leads the response. Further to this, it was felt that joint communications for the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service should be developed across partner agencies for enhanced capability.

In relation to emergency planning for future incidents, particularly in relation to Covid-19, it was felt that plans relating to human health incidents need to be reviewed and

that planning for a second response to Covid-19 should take priority, to ensure previous responses are captured in planning documents and ready to use where suitable, and dependent on future scenarios. Along with this, arrangements in relation to Humanitarian Assistance should be reviewed, and where applicable, emergency plans should be amended accordingly. It was also felt that early establishment of an Incident Management Team and any relevant sub-groups should be repeated in future incidents where early warning of an incident is available, as it is easier to stand down a response than attempting to catch up during a response to an incident.

In addition to the emergency planning for future incidents recommendations, a number of officers suggested relevant officers should participate in training and exercising relevant to their employment roles and responsibilities, with Directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Chief Executive undertaking strategic / gold officer training, and all Heads of Service being required to undertake tactical / silver officer training. This would ensure these Officers are familiar with LRF structure and processes involved in incident response. As well as this, all Council Officers should undertake basic awareness sessions in relation to emergency planning, and the Council's role during an emergency. To support this, all employment contracts should include a statement on the generic requirement of Council Officers to undertake activities, at a level commensurate with the skills and experience required by their role, to assist in ensuring the Council meets its legal duties under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004 by preparing for or responding to emergencies and incidents where required.

Tactical Officers raised that they would like to see the Council continue to be flexible and be able to redeploy staff and resources to meet priorities as they change during incidents, and that the use of redeployed staff should be based on skills, knowledge and training. It was raised that the Council does not have sufficient resources to deal with the issues prolonged incidents such as Covid-19 bring about, and that this needs reviewing. Tactical Officers would also like to see a focus placed on mental health and wellbeing as a key strategy to ensure the pace and endurance of key personnel involved in incidents, and for those involved to ensure they take frequent breaks, with future training designed to encourage this. Further to this, Tactical Officers recommended that the Council needs to look into the issue of multiple people in a vehicle / cab, and agree upon a consistent approach based on the latest understanding and experience gained recently - some did more than others to protect staff on the precautionary principle and have subsequently experienced different resource impacts leading to inconsistencies in services and positions, and some mitigation measures are difficult to 'row back' from once implemented. Some are also eager to make commitments of support measures without necessarily agreeing a position with regional colleagues and some relationships need to be developed.

During future responses to incidents, Tactical Officers stated that better document control and retention would be beneficial due to the volume of documentation being received across the Council, including new and amended versions of advice, guidance, policy and legislation. The recommendation is for thought to be given as to how information and documentation should be managed should an incident similar to Covid-19 occur in the future e.g. document storage via the Intranet, an Incident Information Security Manager etc.

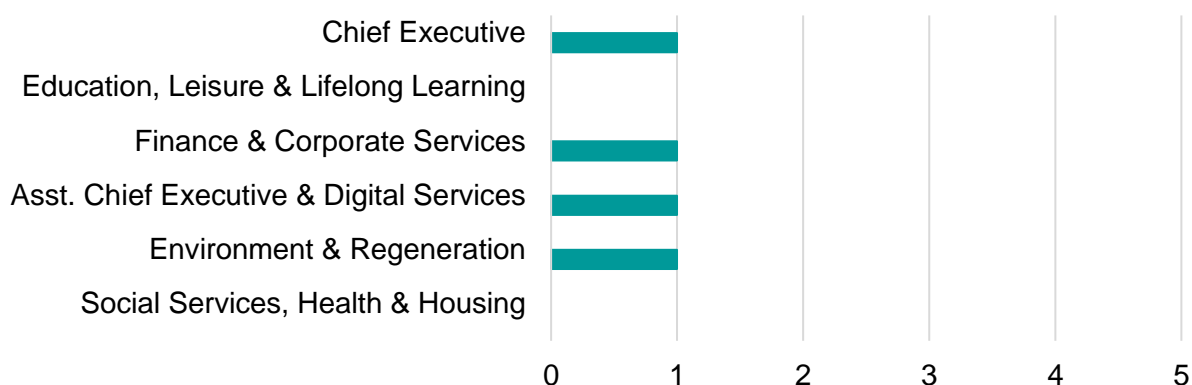
Tactical Officers recommended that more work be done in relation to public communications for residents who are digitally excluded. It was also recommended that the Council should build upon the community action which took place during the period of lockdown between March and May 2020, and look at how the Council can encourage communities to continue to support each other during future emergencies.

The final recommendation from Tactical Officers is around care of the dead arrangements. It is felt that care of the dead is a matter relating to health boards rather than for local authorities, and that if health boards took the lead responses would be quicker and more efficient. It was stressed that local authorities would still provide a supporting role in the matter, via provision of temporary vehicle adaptation etc. It was also felt that there needs to be a higher level approach to temporary storage of excess bodies, as existing approaches only cover regional efforts.

### 3.3. Strategic Level Incident Debrief

The debrief survey issued to Council Officers involved in the strategic level of the response to Covid-19 received 4 responses. The table below shows the breakdown of responses per directorate:

**Table 3:** Breakdown of tactical survey responses per NPTCBC directorate.



All persons were informed of the ethics of the debrief process. Participants of the strategic debrief survey were asked to share their views of the Council's response to Covid-19 via the following questions:

1. From an NPTCBC perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?
2. From an NPTCBC perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
3. How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?
4. From a multi-agency perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?
5. From a multi-agency perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 Incident?
6. How can the multi-agency response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?

### 3.3.1 From an NPTCBC perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?

Strategic Officers who took part in the debrief felt that Council Officers responded brilliantly to the incident, and that the partnership with the Trade Unions worked well. In general, it was felt that communication at all levels was good, including sharing of information with Elected Members and the Council Leader.

Strategic Officers felt that the early establishment of the Incident Management Team was beneficial as it ensured the Council had the right Officers responding at the right level, included in this was the appointment of the Chief Executive as the Chair of the Incident Management Team, given the nature and the scale of the incident. The frequent Incident Management Team Meetings were also considered to be helpful as they enabled sharing of information across the Directorates, and as a result the sharing of best practise and enabled consistent operating practises. It was also felt that Incident Management Team was useful in allowing for opportunities to express opinions in an open and non-judgemental forum, and allowed all attendees a chance to effectively contribute to the response as a collective. Tactical Officers also expressed that it was helpful including the Emergency Planning Team at the strategic level of the Councils response, as it enabled the Emergency Planning Team to be readily available for advice.

It was also reported in the Strategic Officer debrief that regular feedback was given by different directorates, but that it must be acknowledged that some Council Services were more open than others.

### 3.3.2 From an NPTCBC perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?

Strategic Officers reported that early in the response to Covid-19, initial coordination was an issue. It was also reported that it was difficult to run all decisions past Elected Members, especially as a lot of the decisions need quick responses due to the pace of the incident.

Strategic Officers also reported that communications could sometimes be an issue, especially as incident specific issues were being discussed outside of the Incident Management Team and the details were often not made available to all members of the Incident Management Team. It was also noted that Strategic Officers did not use the incident log on the [DRAGON 2 System](#), and that correspondence was often not sent to the [NPTCBC Incidents Inbox](#) which was set up to ensure all correspondence was stored in one place.

In relation to redeployment of staff, it was felt that Directorates wasted a lot of the time of the Workforce Planning Group, as Directorates would request additional staff and then remove the request. Strategic Officers also reported that homeworking was not necessarily appropriate for all Council Services or Officers, and that the Councils response to dealing with this has been slow.



Strategic Officers also felt that Officer health and wellbeing was an issue at times, due to the length of hours worked. Many Officers were required to work extremely long hours throughout the response phase of the incident, with limited breaks or time off.

### **3.3.3 How can the local authority's response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?**

Strategic Officers recommend that internal communications needs improving, particularly around the sharing of workforce policies, increasing the use of the designated NPTCBC Incidents Inbox and increasing the use of the DRAGON 2 System for incident logging purposes amongst responding Council Officers.

As discussed in [section 3.3.2](#) it was felt that Directorates wasted a lot of the time of the Workforce Planning Group, as Directorates would request additional staff and then remove the request. This could be managed in the future by Directorates giving proper thought to redeployment requests and preparing them in advance of meetings with the Workforce Planning Group to avoid wasting time.

In addition, it was also felt by some Strategic Officers that emergency planning and resilience planning should be given more priority, and should become more of a corporate endeavour, with Officers provided training at a level commensurate with their roles and responsibilities, as discussed within the Tactical Officer debriefs.

### **3.3.4 From a multi-agency perspective, what went well during the Covid-19 incident?**

Strategic Officers who took part in the debrief felt that the joint response between NPTCBC, Swansea City Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board worked well. It was also reported that attendance at the SWLRF Strategic Coordination Group was helpful as the LRF cascaded all of the new regulations and guidance to LRF members, and helped to share examples of best practice, work on common problems etc. This enabled Council Officers who attended the SWLRF Strategic Coordination Group to gain a better understanding of the issues across the SWLRF area, and as such a better perspective on the wider area and bigger issues. It was also felt that the information sharing at the LRF level was good.

It was also reported in the Strategic Officer debrief that regular feedback was given by different external agencies, but that it must be acknowledged that some agencies were more open than others.

### **3.3.5 From a multi-agency perspective, what did not go well during the Covid-19 incident?**

Strategic Officers felt that SWLRF did not function as it should and requires a substantive overhaul, as its precise role and added value remains unclear. It was also reported that the establishment of the SWLRF response and the direction provided by SWLRF was unsatisfactory. It was also felt that SWLRF did not make much of a difference to the overall outcome of the incident, and that LRF level response plans in



relation to pandemics will need reviewing in light of the pressures and issues revealed throughout the response.

Respondents felt there were issues with liaising with Welsh Government or with the level of communication from Welsh Government. Strategic Officers felt that the guidance coming from Welsh Government was often too late, unclear, and contradictory or did not contain enough information to support restrictions or changes to restrictions.

It was reported during the Strategic Officer debrief that working with Swansea Bay University Health Board could be difficult at times, due to the frequency the health board change their position regarding the Temporary Field Hospitals, and their reluctance to take liability and responsibility for the Temporary Field Hospitals, as well as the lack of concern showed by the health board in relation to costs. Similar experiences also occurred with the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service in terms of Health Board staff being difficult to work with. The frequency of meetings at the strategic level also became an issue, as Strategic Officers felt that some meetings, particularly those relating to the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service were too frequent, with the number of meetings becoming unmanageable. It was also felt that supporting documents for these meetings were also issued either late the night before a meeting, or immediately prior to the meeting taking place, leaving little time to prepare adequately.

Strategic Officers also reported that there were issues with Public Health Wales as the organisation was only operating at a national, strategic level, with restricted links into SWLRF and to local authorities. It is acknowledged however that Public Health Wales has provided a consultant to feed into the Swansea Bay regional area regional 'Outbreak Escalation Plan'.

### **3.3.6 How can the multi-agency response to emergencies, such as the Covid-19 incident, be improved in the future?**

Strategic Officers felt that there needs to be a review of the functionality of SWLRF, along with the involvement of Welsh Government and Public Health Wales during incidents.

## **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the overall co-ordination and response to the Covid-19 incident was very good. However, there were a number of issues with the Council's response, such as issues around communications, ICT and staff redeployment. As a result, there are a number of recommendations that need to be considered across the Council and external partner agencies to ensure a more efficient and coordinated response in future incidents. All recommendations for improvements are recorded in [NPTCBC Covid-19 Incident Forward Action Plan](#).

## 5. NPTCBC Covid-19 Incident Forward Action Plan

**All services:** Upon resolving an issue / action / recommendation, [please update this Forward Action Team via Microsoft Teams](#), or alternatively inform NPTCBC's Emergency Planning Team via [ept@npt.gov.uk](mailto:ept@npt.gov.uk) so they can update this forward action plan. The progress of the forward action plan will be discussed during future Corporate Directors Group meetings and Resilience Co-ordinators Meetings.

ACTION:		OWNER:	DEADLINE:	PROGRESS DETAILS:	DATE RESOLVED:
1	Ensure communication is continued and encouraged across all teams and directorates, particularly during incidents and emergencies.	Corporate Directors Group			
2	Ensure the correct people are involved during emergencies, through the use of a pre-determined Incident Management Team and relevant sub-groups (via the NPTCBC Major Incident Plan)	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group		Development of this began in late 2019 / early 2020 via a new NPTCBC Major Incident Plan	
3	Look at how staff can be better informed about other Council Services and what those services to	Corporate Directors Group			
4	Regularly update staff on changes in relation to Covid-19, as well as updating the public	Corporate Directors Group		<p>Gov.notify is utilised to issue urgent updates to staff who have provided personal email addresses via the Employee Portal. Whilst the majority of employees can be contacted in this way, the 'reach' will improve on implementation of the I Trent HR Employee Database in April 2021.</p> <p>Employees communications are managed via the weekly HR Sway, the monthly In the Loop, regular updates on the internet (with signposting from the main page) and via email circulation to Heads of Service for dissemination to line managers and onwards to their teams.</p> <p>A wide range of resources have been developed since March 2020 and are available on the internet:</p> <p>General Covid update for staff: <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/staff">https://www.npt.gov.uk/staff</a></p> <p>Staff and line manager Frequently Asked Questions: <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/22499">https://www.npt.gov.uk/22499</a></p> <p>Test, Trace and Protect information for staff (how to get a test etc): <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/23776">https://www.npt.gov.uk/23776</a></p> <p>Homeworking resources (including DSE risk assessment): <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395">https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395</a></p> <p>Return to workplaces (including risk assessments): <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/23777">https://www.npt.gov.uk/23777</a></p> <p>Online training resources: <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/22632">https://www.npt.gov.uk/22632</a></p> <p>Staff health and wellbeing: <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/22793">https://www.npt.gov.uk/22793</a></p>	28/10/2020

5	Be more considerate towards those who are digitally excluded and look at how to engage and communicate with excluded persons better	<b>Communications &amp; Digital Services</b>			
6	Communicate to staff what emergency plans have been implemented during an emergency response	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Communications &amp; Digital Services</b>			
7	Communicate the role of the Council during an emergency to staff, as well as the roles and responsibilities of groups such as the Incident Management Team, and roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in an emergency. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of Council-wide e-learning</li> <li>Adding roles and responsibilities into employment contracts</li> </ul>	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group</b>		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across the Council for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services). Information is also readily available within the Councils <a href="#">Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Policy</a> .	
8	Provide feedback to staff involved in the response	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team</b>			
9	Look for further opportunities to develop multi-disciplinary team and corporate working, encourage services to be more joined up.	<b>Corporate Directors Group</b>			
10	Develop a communications plan in the Welsh Language in readiness for future emergencies	<b>Communications &amp; Digital Services</b>			
11	Develop exercises for Council Services involved in emergency response to enhance preparedness.	<b>Emergency Planning Team</b>			
12	Ensure all Council Services have access to Microsoft Teams, as this makes emergency response more efficient, as well as supporting the needs of all services.	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Digital Services</b>			
13	Ensure all ICT Servers are updated to limit issues with ICT connections.	<b>Digital Services, Corporate Directors Group</b>			
14	Provide all Council Officers with laptops to aid remote working and to assist with business continuity arrangements.	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Digital Services</b>			
15	Consider making all work paperless to limit the need to attend offices, to assist the Digital Strategy and to help lower Carbon Footprints in light of the Climate Emergency.	<b>Corporate Directors Group, All services</b>			
16	Identify Council Officers who could be redeployed to other Services during an emergency via the use of skills mapping to develop of a Volunteers / Redeployment Register	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources, Emergency Planning Team</b>		<p>In March the Head of HR issued a Skills Audit questionnaire to employees to identify a) their availability for redeployment and b) their specific skills sets which we used to match against identified gaps in the front line. The ICT team built a database to support the issuing of the questionnaire and the receipt of responses – this was made available within a week of lock down. The work of the HR team was re-prioritised to support redeployment as a key priority to support the Council's response and the Learning Training &amp; Development team supported the retraining of employees being redeployed to the frontline.</p> <p>Through this, we were able to redeploy approximately 300+ employees into critical areas such as the Safe &amp; Well service and the Contact Tracing team.</p>	<b>28/10/2020</b>

				A similar exercise has been carried out in September 2020 with shielding school employees who have been unable to return to school, but who could be available to undertake work from home.	
17	Offer training to Council Officers identified via recommendation 14 prior to emergencies, to enable redeployment to run more efficiently (e.g. phone call handling, manual handling etc.)	<b>Training &amp; Development Team, Human Resources</b>		The Council's Learning, Training and Development team prioritised their service to deliver bespoke training to equip the front line. Examples include manual handling training to the volunteers in the Safe and Well Service, manual handling and medications training to front line redeployees to Home Care, telephone call handling to the Contact Tracing Team. Two employees from LT&D were based on site with the Safe and Well Team for a number of weeks and two employees from LT&D were based full-time with the Contact Tracing team for a couple of months.	28/10/2020
18	Ensure roles of staff involved in emergency response and redeployment are defined – this will also stop duplication of roles.	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources, Emergency Planning Team</b>		When the HR team is advised of a need for redeployees we do ask that the 'recruiting' line manager provides a job 'brief' (similar to a job description) so that redeployees are aware of what they are being asked to do. In line with recommendation 61 we will develop a 'Redeployment Request Form' to ensure that managers properly describe the duties and the skills required, along with any training that will need to be put in place. This will enable both HR and LT&D to determine whether or not the request can be met from within the Council's workforce.	TBC
19	Consider redeploying staff fully into another Service rather than splitting them between their usual Service and redeployed Service.	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources</b>		In the main employees were redeployed on a full time basis – we only redeployed employees on a part-time basis in circumstances where they were only able to fulfil part of their substantive post due to the Covid emergency and therefore had some capacity to offer support elsewhere. It is up to line managers whether or not they want to accept the redeployees who are available to them – part-time or otherwise.	28/10/2020
20	Review policies and procedures regarding staff redeployment, to ensure the correct staff are redeployed at the correct time.	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources</b>		We will develop a Redeployment Request form to enable managers to set out more clearly the specific skill sets they need (see response to recommendation 18).  It should be noted however, that the ability to redeploy depends on the employees available for redeployment – if managers request a skill set that is not held amongst the available pool for redeployment, then consideration needs to be given to e.g. external recruitment, the use of agency staff, etc.	TBC
21	Offer training to all Council Officers so that if they are required to be involved in future emergencies they'll have a better understanding of the Council's role and responsibilities during an emergency, are able to be redeployed more easily and efficiently, and to enhance Officer preparedness and resilience.	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across the Council for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services).	
22	Develop a future emergency response to Covid-19 based on the initial response	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>		Development of 'Guidance for the Re-escalation of the NPTCBC Covid-19 Response' is currently underway, awaiting provision of actions from relevant Covid-19 response groups.	
23	Ensure planning for a second response to Covid-19 is prioritised, to ensure previous responses are captured in planning documents and ready to use where suitable, and dependent on future scenarios	<b>All Services, Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>			

24	Ensure lessons learnt from the Covid-19 incident are implemented	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team			
25	Sub-groups linked to the Incident Management Team to consider carrying out debrief sessions amongst each sub-group to look how those sub-groups could improve future responses to Covid-19 (e.g. NPT Safe and Well have identified that referral interviews need to gather more structured information, such as emergency contact number, specialist agency involvement, details of family members and their needs)	Corporate Directors Group			
26	Consider holding Lessons Learnt Workshops to ensure those involved in the Covid-19 Incident Management Team understand what is required by frontline / Operational Officers.	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team			
27	Identify a single point of contact (SPOC) per Council Service and provide a list to all Services for ease of access and to improve efficiency regarding queries and requests (e.g. consider providing all Council Services with a generic email address)	Corporate Directors Group, All Services			
28	Have cohesive business continuity arrangements in place for a number of circumstances and scenarios	Corporate Directors Group, All Services			
29	Ensure communications are on the agenda for Councils Officers responding to emergencies	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team			
30	Consider rewarding staff for their work during emergencies such as Covid-19	Corporate Directors Group, Human Resources		For further discussion by Corporate Directors Group.	TBC
31	Consider how to work closer with communities and Elected Members to support the community response to an emergency in a more coordinated way.	Corporate Directors Group, Emergency Planning Team, Electoral Services		Emergency Planning Team has developed an e-learning programme as well as guidance on emergency planning and response for Elected Members, as well as developing Community Resilience Plans to support communities and Elected Members during any emergency. Additionally, the Emergency Planning Team have developed a scheme for educating children and young people about emergencies and preparedness, and have developed a School Emergency Plan to ensure schools are better prepared for emergencies.	
32	Consider building better resilience in stock levels in relation to cleaning products, PPE etc.	Corporate Directors Group, Facilities			
33	Provide guidance internally on what additional costs can be funded by Welsh Government during an emergency.	Finance			
34	Have policies in place regarding flexi, annual leave, child care issues etc. and policies such as the Homeworking Policy and Return to the Workplace following Covid-19 Guidance are in place ready for future emergencies, and ensure these are communicated.	Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group		We have developed our arrangements for Home working <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395">https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395</a> and the Return to workplaces <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/23777">https://www.npt.gov.uk/23777</a> , available on the internet and communicated via the weekly HR Sway and In the Loop, as well as personal messages from the Chief Executive. These were developed in partnership with the trade unions and in consultation with the Workforce Planning Group and management teams across the Council. It is important though that these are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are relevant to the changing circumstances of the pandemic. Whilst these arrangements will no doubt help inform the 'new normal' as the Council eventually	Ongoing



				recovers from the pandemic, the Workforce Planning Group has begun a conversation around the Blended Workplace, and what the future could look like.	
35	Have policies in place for what managers should be doing with their staff such as: homeworking, office access, rotas, team meetings, supervision, contactable hours (for staff and managers)	<b>Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group</b>		Advice and guidance has been issued to line managers around managing remotely, and flexibly in the current circumstances. See <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395">https://www.npt.gov.uk/24395</a> and <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/22499">https://www.npt.gov.uk/22499</a> . These arrangements needs to be flexible to take account of individual circumstances, but also to enable managers to develop arrangements that fit with their specific business service needs.	<b>28/10/2020</b>
36	Be clear when communicating office closures and ensure Officers do not attend when an office has been declared as closed.	<b>Corporate Directors Group, Communications &amp; Digital Services</b>		The Chief Executive issued a clear instruction on 23 <sup>rd</sup> March (the day of office closures) via Gov.Notify to employees' personal contacts, advising that the offices were closed. This will have reached approximately ¾ of the Council's employees. Implementation of the I Trent HR Employee Database in April 2021 will improve this reach.	<b>28/10/2020</b>
37	Consider and provide guidance on how reinstatement of facilities, such as Llandarcy Field Hospital, should be carried out (e.g. funding, reimbursements, use of other facilities, timescales etc.)	<b>Corporate Directors Group</b>			
38	Have cohesive business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place for ICT / Digital Services.	<b>Digital Services, Corporate Directors Group</b>			
39	Advise Welsh Government of the need for improved communication and engagement regarding earlier notification of potential changes to legislation, funding in relation to Covid-19, prior to decisions on such changes being made public.	<b>Corporate Directors Group</b>			
40	Ensure multi-agency responses are coordinated and agreed before being communicated to third parties involved in incident response.	<b>All Services, Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>			
41	Consider keeping the joint policy currently in place between South Wales Police and other enforcement agencies to ensure a consistent approach to enforcement.	<b>Corporate Directors Group</b>			
42	Recommend to SWLRF that any future response to Covid-19 should be led by the right agency.	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>			
43	Consider developing joint communications for the 'Test, Trace and Protect' Service across partner agencies for enhanced capability.	<b>Environmental Health, Corporate Directors Group</b>			
44	Review plans relating to human health incidents	<b>Emergency Planning Team</b>			
45	Review of arrangements with voluntary organisations for humanitarian assistance e.g. British Red Cross (report to be written and be made available to Council services who respond to emergencies).	<b>Emergency Planning Team</b>		Due to be carried out as part of recommendations from the Storm Dennis Post Incident Report.	
46	Consider early activation of the Incident Management Team and relevant sub-groups if suitable e.g. if early warning of an incident is available.	<b>Emergency Planning Team</b>			
47	Consider making emergency and resilience planning a corporate endeavour with a higher priority within the organisation.	<b>Corporate Directors Group</b>			

48	Offer specific strategic (gold) training and exercises to all directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Chief Executive to enhance preparedness, ensure Officers are familiar with the LRF structure and processes involved in incident response.	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services). Accredited All-Wales Gold Officer training is carried out by SWLRF on an annual basis – 2 Officers of this level have currently undertaken this training. Exercises are regularly undertaken at a multi-agency level, with the Emergency Planning Team planning both multi-agency and internal exercise for the future.	
49	Offer specific tactical (silver) training and exercises to all Heads of Service to enhance preparedness, ensure Officers are familiar with the LRF structure and processes involved in incident response.	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>		The Emergency Planning Team has been developing e-learning packages which can be shared across for this purpose (pending a trial by staff in Finance and Corporate Services). Accredited All-Wales Silver Officer training is due to be carried out by SWLRF on an annual basis in the near future. Exercises are regularly undertaken at a multi-agency level, with the Emergency Planning Team planning both multi-agency and internal exercise for the future.	
50	Consider updating all employment contracts to include a statement on the generic requirement of Council Officers to undertake activities, at a level commensurate with the skills and experience required by their role, to assist in ensuring the Council meets its legal duties under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004 by preparing for or responding to emergencies and incidents where required (thus supporting response arrangements and requirements to undertake relevant training)	<b>Emergency Planning Team, Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group</b>		This statement is included within job descriptions 'any duties commensurate with the post' – the job description forms part of the contract of employment. No further action is required in relation to this recommendation.	<b>28/10/2020</b>
51	Consider reviewing whether existing resources are sufficient for incident response, particularly for prolonged incidents such as Covid-19.	<b>Corporate Directors Group</b>			
52	Consider placing a focus on mental health and wellbeing as a key strategy to ensure the pace and endurance of key personnel involved in incidents, and support the need for frequent breaks within relevant training.	<b>Human Resources, Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>		<p>The 'Well-being Series' a 4 week on line course was provided to the Corporate Management Team in July 2020, aimed at supporting the senior team to consider ways in which they can maximise their well-being. The senior team have been advised to take annual leave at regular intervals for rest and recuperation purposes.</p> <p>A range of other wellbeing and mental health resources are available on the internet, including signposting to a range of support networks: <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/22793">https://www.npt.gov.uk/22793</a>. These resources do need to be reviewed and updated, and this will be actioned by December 2020.</p> <p>In September 2020, the HR team supported the development of a network of Mental Health Champions, to raise awareness across the Council about mental health matters. Over 300 employees have attended and completed on line Mental Health 1<sup>st</sup> Aid training since March 2020.</p>	<b>Ongoing</b>
53	Review the issue of multiple people in a vehicle / cab, and agree upon a consistent approach based on the latest understanding and experience gained recently (e.g. some have done more than others, resulting in impacts on some services).	<b>Human Resources, Health &amp; Safety Team, Corporate Directors Group</b>		This is ongoing and under review in partnership with trade unions.	<b>Ongoing</b>

54	Consider implementing better document control and retention during prolonged incidents, including giving more thought to how information and documentation should be managed should an incident similar to Covid-19 occur in the future e.g. document storage via the Intranet, an incident Information Security Manager etc.	Corporate Directors Group			
55	Discuss at LRF level who should take the primacy on care of the dead issues (health boards should be natural lead) and request at LRF level that there needs to be a higher level approach to temporary storage of excess bodies, as existing approaches only cover regional efforts.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
56	Review of the functionality of SWLRF during incidents.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group, SWLRF			
57	Review the involvement and functionality of Welsh Government during incidents.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group, SWLRF, Welsh Government			
58	Review the involvement and functionality of Public Health Wales during incidents.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group, SWLRF, Public Health Wales			
59	Ensure information and communications relating to incidents categorised under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004 are sent to the NPTCBC Incidents Inbox where appropriate ( <a href="mailto:incidents@npt.gov.uk">incidents@npt.gov.uk</a> ) as this will provide record of correspondence and key information, and this can then be available if requested for learning or litigation purposes.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
60	Ensure the DRAGON 2 System is used for incident logging by Council Officers responding to an incident categorised under the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004, as this will ensure a record of actions and key information is logged and available if requested for learning or litigation purposes.	Emergency Planning Team, Corporate Directors Group			
61	Develop a redeployment request form for completion by Directors in the event of future redeployment of staff in response to an incident.	Human Resources, Corporate Directors Group		This will be actioned (see responses to recommendations 16 and 18 above).	TBC



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### **Emergency Planning Team | Tîm Cynllunio ar gyfer Argyfwng**

Human Resources | Adnoddau Dynol

Finance & Corporate Services | Cyllid a Gwasanaethau Gorfforaethol

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council | Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot