



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Impact of COVID-19 Protections in Wales

Brief Summary

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Science Evidence Advice (SEA)

gov.wales

Providing evidence and advice for Health and Social Services
Group on behalf of the Chief Scientific Advisor for Health

Impact of COVID-19 Protections in Wales – Brief Summary

The Science Evidence Advice (SEA) report 'Impact of COVID-19 Protections in Wales' summarises research and data on the impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) on the Welsh population. The report considers data from March 2020 to July 2022.

Overall, the analysis identified that the COVID-19 protections in place during the pandemic were generally successful in reducing the transmission and direct impact of the virus. However, there were multiple indirect harms as a result of these protections, which likely continue to impact many aspects of our society in Wales.

Key points:

- Protections reduced direct harms from COVID-19 in Wales by reducing transmission, and by extension reduced hospitalisations, deaths and pressure on the NHS.
- Stay at home orders ('lockdowns') were associated with an increase in the number of patient pathways waiting to start treatment. However, this may have been increased further had the protections not been in place.
- Government messaging and advice reduced emergency department attendance during wave peaks and increased NHS 111 calls in Wales.
- More individuals worried 'a lot' about their own mental health and wellbeing during periods of high COVID-19 protections. Worry about mental health and wellbeing was greater in residents of more deprived communities, females and younger age groups.
- Protections were associated with an increase in educational inequalities. In summer 2021, there was a statistically significant increase between the grades achieved by those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible.
- The furlough scheme had a positive impact maintaining employment levels in 2020 but were associated with an increase in the number of people claiming state benefits. Overall employment inequalities were increased.
- COVID-19 protections were successful at reducing hospitalisation inequalities by deprivation quintiles between March and April 2020.
- The analysis in this SEA report aligns with those from the Royal Society's report 'COVID-19: examining the effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical interventions'¹ which found that stringent implementation of packages of NPIs was effective in some countries in reducing transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

¹ [The Royal Society's programme on the impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions on Covid-19 transmission | Royal Society](#)