November 2026

Dear

ATISN 26-0086 – Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Thank you for your request to Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 22 October 2026, relating to Welsh Government's Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plans.

You have asked for the following:

1. *A copy of the Welsh Government's pandemic preparedness and response plan that was current immediately before 1 January 2020, including its appendices and supporting operational arrangements.*

2. *A copy of the most recent version of the Welsh Government's pandemic preparedness and response plan held at the date of this request, including its appendices and supporting operational arrangements.*

You have also stated that:

- *For each plan, please confirm its title, version number, approval date and most recent review date.*
- *If pandemic preparedness is covered by several plans rather than one overarching document, please provide the relevant documents, including any separate pandemic influenza plan and adult social care pandemic plan.*
- *If no current overarching plan is held, please confirm this and identify the documents presently used to guide the Welsh Government's pandemic preparedness and response.*

Our Response

Welsh Government holds the information you requested; the relevant document and the public hyperlinks are included.

Some of the information requested in the attached document is exempt from disclosure under sections 24 and 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The reasons for applying these exemptions are set out in full at Annex 1 to this letter**.**

We have also decided that some of the information described in the enclosed list is exempt from disclosure under section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act: Formulation of government policy. The reasons for applying these exemptions are set out in full at Annex 2 to this letter.

Responses under question 1.				
Title	**Version number**	**Approval date**	**Most recent review date**	**Link/Exception**

Wales Health and Social Care Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response Guidance	3	February 2014	4 February 2014	Wales Health and Social Care Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response Guidance, dated February 2014 - UK Covid-19 Inquiry
Wales Framework for Managing Major Infectious Disease Emergencies	Unknown	October 2014	Unknown	Wales Framework for Managing Major Infectious Disease Emergencies, dated October 2014 - UK Covid-19 Inquiry
The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales	Unknown	April 2014	Unknown	The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales, dated April 2014 - UK Covid-19 Inquiry
Health and Social Services Group Arrangements for Responding to Emergencies	Unknown	January 2019	Unknown	Document attached with redactions under sections 24 and 40.
Pan-Wales Response Plan	Unknown	2019	Unknown	Pan-Wales Response Plan, dated 2019 - UK Covid-19 Inquiry
Responses under question 2.				
The communicable disease outbreak plan for Wales	1	5 December 2023	Unknown	The communicable disease outbreak plan for Wales - Public Health Wales
Welsh Government Contingency Plan for Exotic Notifiable Diseases of Animals 2018	v.1.0	2018	Unknown	Welsh Government Contingency Plan for Exotic Notifiable Diseases of Animals 2018
Draft Welsh Government Crisis Management Concept of Operations document	In draft	In draft	Not applicable	Exempt from disclosure under section 35
Draft Welsh Government Pandemic Concept of Operations document	In draft	In draft	Not applicable	Exempt from disclosure under section 35
Winter Respiratory Framework 2024 to 2025	Not applicable	September 2025	Not applicable	Winter respiratory framework 2024 to 2025

Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:
Information Rights Unit
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a SAR or FOI complaint until it has been through the Welsh Government's internal review process.

Information Commissioner's Office

4th Floor,

No. 3 Circle Square,

5 Hawkshaw Street,

Manchester,

M1 7BL.

Telephone number: 0303 123 1113

Website: ico.org.uk

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,

Annex 1 – Sections 40(2) (Personal Information) and 24 (Safeguarding National Security)

Section 40(2)
The Welsh Government considers it necessary to redact parts of the *'Health and Social Services Group Arrangements for Responding to Emergencies'* document because it contains personal information. The personal information is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which applies to personal data relating to individuals other than the applicant where disclosure would contravene one or more of the data protection principles set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

We consider that disclosure of this information into the public domain would be unfair to the individuals concerned and would therefore breach the first data protection principle, which requires personal data to be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and is not subject to the public interest test. Personal data has been withheld under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Disclosure would contravene the data protection principles contained in the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest test.

Section 24
The Welsh Government considers it necessary to redact parts of the *'Health and Social Services Group Arrangements for Responding to Emergencies'* document as it holds information that remains relevant to safeguarding national security under section 24 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Public Interest Test
In order to satisfy the public interest test in relation to the exemptions, it is necessary to conclude that the public interest arguments in favour of withholding the information are sufficient to *outweigh* the public interest arguments in favour of release.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure
There is a strong public interest in transparency about how the Welsh Government developed its crisis-management and pandemic-response policies and plans. Disclosure would support public understanding, accountability and scrutiny, particularly considering recent and ongoing reviews of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public interest arguments in favour of maintaining the exemption
The withheld information contains details of still relevant crisis management and/or pandemic capabilities, vulnerabilities or operational arrangements. Disclosure could reveal vulnerabilities in crisis-management and emergency-response arrangements and could assist a hostile actor, particularly if the information were combined with material available from other sources. We therefore consider that withholding this information is reasonably necessary for the purpose of safeguarding national security.

Balance of the public interest
We recognise the significant public interest in openness and in demonstrating that crisis management and pandemic preparedness arrangements are effective. However, this must be balanced against the potential harm that could arise from disclosing sensitive information about those arrangements. On balance, we consider that the public interest in safeguarding the United Kingdom and its people outweighs the public interest in disclosure, and that the information should therefore be withheld under section 24(1).

Annex 2 - Application of Section 35

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of sections 35 of the Freedom of Information Act and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test. The Welsh Government believes that the full exclusion of two documents *('Draft Welsh Government Crisis Management Concept of Operations'* and '*Draft Welsh Government Pandemic Concept of Operations'*) should be exempt from disclosure as they are currently in use for the formation of government policy.

Public Interest Test
In order to satisfy the public interest test in relation to the exemptions, it is necessary to conclude that the public interest arguments in favour of withholding the information are sufficient to *outweigh* the public interest arguments in favour of release.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure
There is a strong public interest in understanding how we develop policies for crisis management and response, particularly considering recent and ongoing inquiries and reviews on the COVID-19 pandemic. We also recognise that disclosing this information would promote greater transparency and openness.

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding
We recognise that open policy-making builds public trust. However, the requested information relates to ongoing improvements in crisis and pandemic preparedness, personal information or national security implications. Section 35 aims to give officials a safe space to explore all options and test plans before they are finalised, without the prospect of disclosure hindering thorough preparation.

Balance of public interest test
On balance, withholding this information serves the wider public interest by giving the government a safe space to develop policy and plans for pandemic preparedness. Disclosing internal discussions could inhibit frank policy development and misrepresent tentative or incomplete thinking.