# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Coronavirus: Providing scientific advice in Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **04 May 2020** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething - Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The Welsh Government’s Chief Scientific Advisor for Health Dr Rob Orford joined the UK Government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) Covid-19 meetings on 11 February 2020.

SAGE is responsible for ensuring timely and co-ordinated scientific advice is available to decision makers to support UK cross-government decisions in the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR).

Wales’ Chief Medical Officer Dr Frank Atherton and Dr Orford agreed a formal technical and scientific advisory structure within Welsh Government was also needed to provide official sensitive advice to Ministers. The terms of reference for a Technical Advisory Cell (TAC) were agreed on 3 March, in accordance with SAGE guidance. TAC meets three times a week.

The TAC is designed to:

* Interpret SAGE outputs into a Welsh context
* Relay relevant information and questions from Welsh Government to SAGE
* Ensure indirect harm is not caused by the proposed interventions
* Help inform NHS and social care planning guidance
* Ensure Welsh Government and Public Health Wales have timely access to the most up-to-date scientific and technical information
* Brief Local Resilience Forum and Strategic Coordinating Group chairs about scientific and technical outputs, via the Strategic Health Coordinating Support Group, which is chaired by Public Health Wales.

TAC does not replace statutory functions of Public Health Wales or use the technical or scientific information, which has not been agreed or discussed by SAGE, unless this has a specific Welsh context.

The priorities of TAC are aligned to SAGE and include:

* The detection and monitoring of coronavirus
* Understanding effective actions to help contain a cluster
* Understand, measure and alter the shape of the UK epidemic
* Ensure indirect harm is not caused by the proposed interventions
* Model the UK epidemic and identify key numbers for NHS planning
* Understand risk factors around demographics, geographies and vulnerable groups
* Generate behavioural science insights for policy makers
* Ensure NHS tests and trials key interventions
* Consider emerging therapeutic, diagnostic and other opportunities.

TAC is co-chaired by Dr Orford and the Deputy Director for Technology and Digital. Membership is drawn from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, Cardiff University and Swansea University. A range of experts from different disciplines are included covering public health, health protection, medicine, epidemiology, modelling, technology, data science, statistics, microbiology, molecular biology, immunology, genomics, physical sciences and research.

Membership of TAC is kept under constant review.