



Ein cyf/Our ref WQ80203, WQ80204, WQ80205, WQ80206,
WQ80210, WQ80155, WQ80156, WQ80315, WQ80414,
WQ81281, WQ80166, WQ80172 and WQ80170

Adam Price MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

2 November 2020

Dear Adam,

I am writing to respond to coronavirus-related Written Questions, which you submitted and have not yet received an answer.

Please accept my apologies for the time it has taken to respond to these questions.

How many respiratory masks were held in the pandemic stockpile on 31 December of each of the last 10 years? WQ80203

How many gowns were held in the pandemic stockpile on 31 December of each of the last 10 years? WQ80204

How many visors were held in the pandemic stockpile on 31 December of each of the last 10 years? WQ80205

How many swabs were held in the pandemic stockpile on 31 December in each the last 10 years? WQ80206

I have set out the items held in our pandemic stockpile over the course of this Senedd term.

Our pandemic stores held a reserve of PPE to protect healthcare professionals who would be in close contact with people suffering from influenza. This included a supply of eye protection, facemasks and gloves.

In relation to the amount of stock held on a number of dates, the stock was unused between June 2016 and February 2020, therefore the amount of stock held for the following items remained the same and was as follows:

- Eye protectors – 1.488m frames, 1.658m lenses
- Facemasks – 5.7m

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- Gloves – 4.8m gloves

Gowns were not included in the pandemic stockpile. Covid-19, which is different to influenza, requires both a different type of PPE and more extensive PPE than was held in our pandemic stores at the start of the pandemic.

How many eye protectors have been provided to (a) NHS and (b) social care staff in response to the coronavirus outbreak? WQ80210

To date, we have issued 1.6m eye protectors to NHS and social care staff in Wales since 9 March.

Will the Minister confirm whether the Welsh Government's proposed future testing policy is consistent with the advice of the World Health Organisation to test every suspected case and every contact that develops symptoms? WQ80155

Contact tracing is a tried and tested method of controlling the spread of infectious diseases. It also helps us to prevent and understand how the disease is passing from person to person.

If someone develops symptoms of coronavirus, they should take a coronavirus test within the first five days of developing symptoms – this is when the test is most effective. If they test positive they will be asked to share details of their close contacts.

This information will help the contact tracing teams to identify how quickly the virus is spreading and whether there are hotspots of infection. These contacts are asked to self-isolate for 14 days to ensure they do not have the virus. They will only be advised to take a test if they are displaying symptoms – testing while asymptomatic can generate false negatives and is not recommended for these reasons.

Not all contacts, activities, or environments have an equal risk of transmission. Contact tracing is not an end in itself. It enables individuals to take the right steps to protect their families, friends and their community by self-isolating.

Is the Welsh Government proposing that every person with coronavirus symptoms should be tested as part of its test and trace policy? WQ80156

Everyone who has symptoms suggestive of coronavirus is able to access testing.

Anyone with a new continuous cough; a high temperature or loss of or change to sense of smell or taste can book a test via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test-or-by-calling-119>.

Anyone with symptoms of coronavirus should self-isolate.

Does the Welsh Government have plans to introduce universal testing for Covid-19 for all healthcare workers, whether they are symptomatic or not? WQ80315

Our *Testing Strategy* is available at: <https://gov.wales/covid-19-testing-strategy-html>. It sets out our priorities for testing and how we will use the two main types of test we currently have – the antigen and antibody test.

The advice we have from the Technical Advisory Cell is that, in relation to asymptomatic testing, the antigen test (RT-PCR) performance is “at its best when its use is targeted, for example, when used to support diagnosis in symptomatic individuals. It is unsuited to the non-targeted screening of asymptomatic individuals, especially in populations with a low prevalence of infection. Use in asymptomatic individuals should, wherever possible, be on

the basis of effective targeting, for example following tracing that has indicated a high-probability of exposure and thus likely infection.”

The strategy states that, in the event of outbreaks, we will “provide access to testing for asymptomatic people where there are signs of local incidents and outbreaks, where deemed necessary by specialist health protection teams in the community or microbiology and infection prevention and control teams in an inpatient setting.”

When did hospital patients, being discharged into care homes, first start to be tested for Covid-19? WQ80414

Guidance was issued on April 22 setting out that all people being discharged from hospital to live in care homes would be tested. Testing was extended to people transferred between care homes and for new admissions from the community. Increased testing was made available within care homes as great capacity became available.

Does the Welsh Government support a policy of routine testing of all staff and patients in hospitals? WQ81281

Our *Testing Strategy*, which is available at: <https://gov.wales/covid-19-testing-strategy.html> sets out our priorities for testing:

- Controlling and preventing transmission of the virus by supporting contact tracing
- Protecting NHS services – to prevent, protect and deliver testing to support the safety of staff, patients and clients
- Protecting vulnerable groups and managing increased transmission rates – to safeguard and control infection in groups, communities or settings where there are greater risks
- Developing future delivery – to use health surveillance and new technologies to improve our understanding of the virus.

What estimates has the Welsh Government made of the level of undercounting of deaths from coronavirus on death certificates? WQ80166

The Office for National Statistics publishes provisional numbers for deaths from all causes one a week, including deaths involving Covid-19.

The statistical publication includes information about the data source it uses and a comparison with other sources of data, such as Public Health Wales, which uses reports from health boards to compile its figures about deaths involving Covid-19. More information is available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregisteredweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/latest>

How many deaths of care and health care workers due to coronavirus have been notified to the Health and Safety Executive as having been the result of work-related exposure? WQ80172

The Welsh Government does not hold this information.

What restrictions are placed on NHS board members and employees on their ability to speak out publicly or criticise different aspects of the Welsh Government’s response to coronavirus? WQ80170

Independent board members are expected to comply with the Nolan principles of public life. NHS employees have a duty of care, first and foremost, to their patients and a duty to speak up on their behalf.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services