

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diben Arbennig Ymchwiliad COVID-19 Cymru | Wales COVID-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee

Adroddiad Modiwl 1 Ymchwiliad Covid-19 y DU | UK-Covid Inquiry Module 1 Report

Ymateb gan Digital Health and Care Wales | Evidence from Digital Health and Care Wales

1. Do the recommendations in the Module 1 report capture the priority actions needed to improve the resilience and preparedness of Wales as part of the UK.

Yes

2. Is there sufficient detail in the recommendations?

Yes

3. Are there any clear gaps requiring the Committee to take further evidence itself?

Don't have a view

Please outline your reasons for your answer to this question.

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words, however should it be required, an additional answer box of 500 words is available).

The recommendations are comprehensive and include:

- New arrangements at government level for civil emergency preparedness and resilience with clear responsibilities and an improved risk assessment approach.
- A new UK-wide whole-system civil emergency strategy and new mechanisms for ensuring data is readily available to inform decision making.
- The UK government and devolved administrations should hold a UK-wide pandemic response exercise at least every three years and each government should publish a report within three months of the exercise containing learning outcomes.
- Each government should produce and publish a report on whole-system civil emergency preparedness and resilience at least every three years.
- The report recommends the regular use of external 'red teams' in the Civil Service of the UK government and devolved administrations to scrutinise and challenge arrangements preparedness for and resilience to whole-system civil emergencies.
- Finally, that the UK government, in consultation with the devolved administrations, should create a UK-wide independent statutory body for whole-system civil emergency preparedness, resilience and response. The body should provide independent, strategic advice to the UK government and devolved administrations, consult with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector at a national and local level, as well as with directors of public health, and make recommendations

Digital Health and Care Wales considered that arrangements in place within Wales to respond to the emergency were robust and also agreed that a level of divergence between the nations was appropriate to ensure local needs were met. However the arrangements were seen by the Inquiry to be complex with many reporting structures and recommendations seek to establish a more resilient national response for any future civil emergency which is positive and welcomed. Our work was not impacted by any divergence in the Welsh Government approach to managing the pandemic.

4. Your views on the resources that will be needed in order to deliver the recommendations, within the timeframes set out in the report.

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words, however should it be required, an additional answer box of 500 words is available).

There will need to be senior resources identified to lead on future responses to civil emergencies, as indeed there were in Wales during the pandemic, with the First Minister assuming lead responsibility. If structures within Wales were simplified and made less complex (a single ministerial committee and a single cross-departmental group of senior officials reporting regularly to the ministerial committee) this should be manageable as the need for a number of forums could be subsumed into these new structures. The timescale of 24 months for completion of this activity is thought to be necessary and appropriate.

5. Your views on how progress should be monitored and reported. The need for transparency and clear lines of accountability for delivery of the recommendations.

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words, however should it be required, an additional answer box of 500 words is available).

It is suggested that it would be appropriate for a Senedd Committee to receive reports on progress of the implementation of the recommendations.

6. Do you have any other points you wish to raise within the scope of this inquiry?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words, however should it be required, an additional answer box of 500 words is available).

No, nothing further to add.