



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

ATISN 15473

29 September 2021

Dear

**ATISN 15473 – COVID VIRUS ISOLATION, PCR TESTING AND DOUBLE COUNTING OF DEATHS**

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 27 August. You requested the following -

- 1. Evidence as to whether the Welsh Government has isolated the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the source of that information?*
- 2. Given that the RT-PCR system is now universally accepted as being not for purpose, what methods are being used to ascertain 'cases'?*
- 3. In November 2020 the Office for National Statistics, in response to a Freedom of Information request stated the following:*

***“Where the deaths are referred to as ‘due to’, only the condition mentioned is involved and there is no double counting***

***On the other hand, ‘deaths involving’ any named condition will have an element of double counting”***

*How many deaths in Wales have been deemed ‘deaths involving’ Covid-19 and have been double counted?*

**Our response**

1. Evidence as to whether the Welsh Government has isolated the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the source of that information?

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention have successfully managed to isolate the COVID-19 Virus. I have attached a paper below on this matter which you can view here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/grows-virus-cell-culture.html>

2. Given that the RT-PCR system is now universally accepted as being not for purpose, what methods are being used to ascertain 'cases'?

Public Health Wales publish COVID-19 daily case and testing data for Wales and this can be viewed here: [Rapid COVID-19 virology - Public | Tableau Public](#)

3. In November 2020 the Office for National Statistics, in response to a Freedom of Information request stated the following:

***“Where the deaths are referred to as ‘due to’, only the condition mentioned is involved and there is no double counting***

***On the other hand, ‘deaths involving’ any named condition will have an element of double counting”***

*How many deaths in Wales have been deemed ‘deaths involving’ Covid-19 and have been double counted?*

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collect and produce mortality statistics for England and Wales based on information from the death registration process. The medical practitioners certifying a death can list all causes in the chain of events that led to the death and pre-existing conditions that may have contributed to the death. Therefore the ONS breakdown Covid-19 deaths into two distinct categories:

- Deaths *involving Covid-19* – were Covid-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate as a contributory cause of death.
- Deaths *due to Covid-19* – were Covid-19 was identified as the underlying (main) cause on the death certificate.

The ONS also show the different [pre-existing conditions](#) of deaths due to Covid-19. What this table shows is the different pre-existing conditions of deaths due to Covid-19. The footnote explains that you cannot add the sum of those pre-existing conditions to determine the total number of deaths due to Covid-19. The total all cause figures produced by the ONS should not double count.

### Monthly Registered number of deaths for Wales up to the end of August

Data	Source: <a href="#">Monthly mortality analysis, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</a>
All causes	Table 1
<i>Of which:</i>	
Deaths <i>involving Covid-19</i>	Table 3a
<i>Of which:</i>	
Deaths <i>due to Covid-19</i>	Table 3b

### 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](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF.

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

Yours sincerely,