



May 2020

Monthly Report



# DAVID REES

## MS FOR ABERAVON

### School re-opening

The Education Minister announced plans for a phased return to schools, due to begin on 29 June, giving schools additional time to adjust and prepare for a “new normal”.

Circumstances in each school will vary and I am sure that schools will communicate their plans to parents once they have been developed, including for those that need transportation to school. I will be reaching out to head teachers to understand their plans for the return of their pupils and offer my support going forward. As we move forward it's also important that the voices of school staff are heard and I will continue to listen to their trade unions and representatives to ensure that our children remain safe whilst they benefit from face to face education.

I appreciate that parents, and children, will still have concerns about returning to school and I understand that. The First Minister previously said that a return to school would be based on “persuasion rather than compulsion” and the Education Minister herself also stated today that parents will not be fined should they not send their children to school whilst they still have concerns over the possibility of Covid-19 being a risk in the coming weeks and I fully support that message. All Welsh Government plans around education must meet the Minister's five key principles, with the safety and wellbeing of children and staff being paramount.

If you have any concerns then please do get in touch with me at [David.Rees@senedd.wales](mailto:David.Rees@senedd.wales) or on 01639 870779.

#### **I raised testing in the care sector with the Minister for Health and Social Services.**

I have been contacted by care homes, staff and family members who are concerned about Covid-19 testing and retesting in the care sector. I have raised this with the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Health Board to ensure that every care home across Neath Port Talbot, whether there is a confirmed case or not, are tested. I have been assured by the Health Board that all Care Homes in the SBUHB area will be tested by the end of the week commencing the 1st June.

I also raised the retesting of care home staff and residents on a regular basis as we have seen some positive results where staff and residents have been asymptomatic and we must ensure a retesting regime that is fit for purpose and provides reassurance to the staff, their families and the families of residents. This is currently being looked at by the Minister.

#### **The launch of the Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit.**

The Welsh Labour Government have launched an online resource which promotes the numerous digital tools designed specifically to support young people with their own mental health and emotional wellbeing. The Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit links young people, aged 11 to 25, to websites, apps, helplines, and more to build resilience and support them through the Coronavirus pandemic and beyond.

I know that many young people are finding the current situation challenging. I am pleased that the Welsh Labour Government have recognised this by launching the Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit which will support young people through this testing time and which is available now.

I hope that young people across Aberavon find it helpful and take a look at what support it can offer them during this increasingly difficult time.

The toolkit can be accessed here:



**Thank You - Diolch**

**To all the Key workers, Voulnteers and those helping to keep our communities safe and connected during the Coronavirus crisis. You are all Amazing.**

# David in the Senedd

**This month I have raised a number of issues which are of concern to residents across Aberavon in the Senedd. These include:**

- Business support during Covid-19 outbreak
- Economic Resilience fund and changes to criteria
- Support for anchor companies such as Tata and Airbus and discussions with the UK Government on CBILS
- Support for the Steel Industry post Covid-19
- Reopening of the Housing Market
- Test, Trace, Protect system
- testing and re-testing in Care Homes
- Re-opening of Dental Services
- Cancer services and referrals
- Trade discussions and Welsh Government input.



*You can visit my Youtube channel for more information where video's of my contributions are hosted.*

## Votes at 16

From Monday (1 June), 16 and 17 year olds can register to vote in the Senedd Elections that take place in 2021. This change is among some of the biggest to the democratic process in Wales in half a century.

The change was introduced in the Senedd and Election (Wales) Act 2020 and is the largest franchise extension in Wales since 1969.

It will make it easier for young people to see, influence and get involved with the work of those who represent them, giving them a voice over the decisions that will define their future. The voting age was last lowered in 1969, in the Representation of the People Act, which saw the voting age lowered from 21 to 18.

I am proud that young people will now have a stake in our democracy here in Wales. For the first time, 16 and 17 year olds will have influence in choosing the Members who will represent them in the next Senedd thus ensuring that the concerns of young people will be foremost in the minds of the elected politicians. Registering to vote is easy and it will ensure you have a say over who makes the decisions that affect you now and that can shape the future Wales you live in. This exciting change will open our democratic process to another generation.



### Surgeries during the Coronavirus Outbreak

If you would like to talk to me about an issue or any concerns you have, please call my office on 01639 870779 or email me at [david.rees@senedd.wales](mailto:david.rees@senedd.wales). You will need to leave your name and a contact telephone number and a member of my team will be in touch to arrange a time for a telephone consultation.

### CONTACT DAVID



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## Welsh Government Announcements

**ALL WELSH GOVERNMENT UPDATES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK ARE UPDATED TO MY WEBSITE DAILY.**

