

Coronavirus – general update Wales

1. General update

Keep Wales safe:

- Stay at home
- Meet only the people you live with
- Maintain social distancing
- Wash your hands regularly
- Work from home if you can

All of Wales is at alert level 4. [What you need to do at alert level 4.](#)

Self-isolate if you or anyone in your household has [symptoms](#)

If you [have symptoms get a test.](#)

2. Children's services related guidance

Stay up to date by reading;

[Public Health Wales Guidance to Prevent COVID19 among Care Home Residents and Manage Cases, Incidents and outbreaks in Residential care settings Wales.](#)

This guidance should be used by all those involved in:

- promoting the well-being of vulnerable children, including those who already have a care and support plan
- safeguarding children at risk including those who already have a care, support and protection plan
- the assessment and planning of care and support for care experienced children
- those making and reviewing placement decisions for looked after children, care leavers and adopted children

The application of this guidance should be made on a case-by-case basis, ensuring the best outcome for children is central to planning and decision making. Recording and evidencing why and how decisions have been reached remains a key responsibility when applying this guidance. Ascertaining children's wishes and feelings remains central to social work practice. Decisions, and the rationale for making those decisions, should be clearly communicated to children and young people.

The aims of this guidance are to:

- encourage a flexible and pragmatic approach to maintaining support for looked after and vulnerable children during the outbreak of novel coronavirus and as measures are relaxed
- recognise the areas of provision where local authorities will struggle to meet their statutory requirements, and provide guidance on the measures that should be put in place that are in the spirit of the law
- minimise the impact of novel coronavirus on Children's Services and partners, when resources available to cope with additional burdens are reduced, and as alternative working practices are being introduced and delivered
- promote partnership working across the breadth of services that support families

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Other useful guidance;

How children's social care providers can change their services to support young people during COVID-19.

[Children's social services during the COVID-19 pandemic guidance](#)

Information from Public Health Wales for Health and Social Care

[Public Health Wales guidance for health and social care professionals.](#)

FAQ'S Public Health Wales

[Children's Residential Care Homes FAQs](#)

CIW response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). CIW have captured some of your most frequently asked questions for care providers and staff across Wales.

[FAQ's Care Inspectorate Wales](#)

****Due to the constant evolution and understanding of COVID-19 disease, guidance is constantly reviewed and updated. You are advised to check all links regularly for the most up to date information.****

Visitors and gatherings in residential settings

[Visits to Care Homes: guidance for providers](#)

The guidance provides advice for care home providers on facilitating:

- outdoor visits
- indoor visits when the level of COVID-19 at a local or national level allows
- indoor visits in exceptional circumstances including end of life
- people going out into the community and visiting family and friends

The guidance sets out an ethical framework to support people living and staying in care homes to reconnect safely with families, friends and professionals, consistent with the requirements of the wider coronavirus restrictions.

The ultimate decision on whether, and in what circumstances care home visits take place rests with the individual provider, and we understand that some providers will find it more challenging to facilitate visits than others. However this guidance is intended to support providers to enable visits to take place, and we expect and encourage providers to facilitate visits wherever possible.

Virtual visits - children's homes

The use of virtual visits should be the exception and can be used as a result of public health advice or when it is not reasonably practicable to have a face-to-face visit otherwise for a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This could include in the event of local restrictions, self-isolation or social distancing advice due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

All uses of this temporary flexibility must be recorded, for example in individual case records, and those records should include the reasons why a virtual visit was necessary. Services may also find it helpful to keep a separate collated record in which cases the flexibility has been used.

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3. Education

In **Wales**, Schools and colleges will stay closed to most pupils until the February half term unless there is a "significant" fall in Covid cases. - Except for children of critical workers, vulnerable youngsters, and learners who need to complete essential exams or assessments. Universities in Wales have already agreed a staggered start to term.

The **Welsh government** has [cancelled next summer's GCSE, AS and A-level exams](#), and grades will be based on classroom assessments.

Schools Guidance – click [here](#)

Other useful education links are available below;

[Guidance for supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners](#)

[Education safeguarding guidance: coronavirus](#)

[Further education: coronavirus](#)

[Guidance for independent boarding and residential special schools in Wales: coronavirus](#)

[Estyn FAQs: COVID-19 and inspection](#)

4. Testing

Testing for children's homes

Large scale testing in care homes is vital to preventing and managing the spread of Covid-19.

People living in care homes are among the most vulnerable people in our communities. Many rely on close personal care. We want to ensure they are protected from the spread of Covid-19 as much as possible.

Asymptomatic testing of care home staff

As part of a package of measures for managing Covid-19 in care homes in Wales and protecting young people and staff, we introduced a programme of asymptomatic testing of staff on 15 June 2020. Taking account of the data and feedback from the care home sector, Local Health Boards, local authorities and trade unions, we have extended the programme until the end of December 2020 enabling statutory partners to determine whether staff in care homes in their local areas should be tested either weekly or fortnightly using their professional judgement informed by data on the incidence and transmission of Covid-19 in their local communities and local intelligence.

All asymptomatic testing of care home staff should now be undertaken through the UK Organisations Portal and the Lighthouse laboratories. Care homes can [order test kits via the online portal for care homes on GOV.UK](#).

The policy to re-test individuals who receive a positive result through asymptomatic testing will remain a Welsh Government decision

Care home testing guidance

Covid-19 PCR testing in care homes. Managing residents and staff who test positive for Covid-19 and reporting arrangements. [here](#)

Testing-Education

Test, Trace, Protect is the Welsh Government's approach to testing and contact tracing to help us live with COVID-19 (coronavirus) whilst work continues to find more effective treatments and a vaccine. The strategy will enable

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citizens, education establishments and businesses of Wales to resume normal activity gradually and safely. The strategy is in the interests of protecting people's health, and works by:

- testing people with coronavirus symptoms, asking them to isolate from wider family, friends and their community whilst waiting for a result
- tracing people who have been in close contact with anyone who tests positive, requiring them to take precautions through self-isolation for 14 days
- protecting the vulnerable or those at risk from the virus, providing advice, guidance and support, particularly if they develop symptoms or have been identified as a contact through the contact tracing process.

[Guidance on testing and contact tracing in education settings](#)

This guidance is intended to support schools, settings and FE providers in offering home test kits.

[Guidance for schools and FE providers: using home test kits](#)

Testing – general population

If you [have symptoms get a test](#)

Vaccination

“The impact of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will offer individual protection as well as greater protection for our loved ones and communities. In time it could mean that restrictions are eased and we can move further towards a return to more normal day-to-day life.” [\(Public Health Wales\)](#)

Why are vaccines important?

Vaccines teach your immune system how to protect you from diseases. It's much safer for your immune system to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and attempting to treat them.

Vaccines can reduce or even eradicate some diseases, if enough people are vaccinated. Since vaccines were introduced, diseases like smallpox and polio that used to kill or disable millions of people are gone from the UK.

Most people have said they would get a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available.

The long term response to the pandemic requires a safe and effective vaccine to be available for all who need it. It's a way to keep friends and family safe, potentially leading to easing of restrictions.

[FAQ's](#)

[Resources for Health and social care professionals](#)