

# Coronavirus control plan: Alert levels in Wales for Social Care Services for Adults and Children



Welsh Government has set out a new four level plan of measures for dealing with coronavirus in Wales. The [Coronavirus control plan](#) sets out in detail how national measures will be introduced depending on the progress of coronavirus across Wales, including how and when there will be movement between these levels.

In line with the four level approach this document sets out specific testing and infection prevention control measures for social care. It will assist with social care services and public understanding of measures to expect at each level and will also assist local Incident Management Teams (IMTs) decision making.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with other guidance for social care providers, specifically the [guidance on infection prevention and control in care homes](#), [guidance on visiting to care homes](#) and the [frequently asked questions for Christmas visiting](#).

## The following four alert levels for Wales will be introduced:

-  **Level 1 / Low Risk:** This represents the level of restriction closest to normality which are possible while infection rates are low and preventative measures in place.
-  **Level 2 / Medium Risk:** This includes additional controls to limit the spread of coronavirus. These may be complemented by more targeted local restrictions put in place to manage hotspots or specific incidents or outbreaks.
-  **Level 3 / High Risk:** These represent the strictest restrictions short of a firebreak or lockdown. This responds to higher or rising level of infections where local actions are no longer effective in containing the growth of the virus.
-  **Level 4 / Very High Risk:** Restrictions at this level would be equivalent to the 'firebreak' regulations or lockdown. These could either be deployed as a 'firebreak' by doing so in advance, or as an emergency 'lockdown' measure if advance notice is not possible

In response, this guidance sets out the general measures that apply to all care homes according to the background rate of COVID-19 in the community. When a home is directly affected by an incident of COVID-19 as a result of cases in residents and/or staff, additional control measures are required based on a risk assessment supported by Environmental Health Teams or Public Health Wales. Each home and incident is unique and therefore the control measures and how long they will be required will vary.

**The general approach should be one of local and individual risk assessment, with blanket approaches being avoided. However, general indoor visiting is not advised during an incident, other than in exceptional circumstances including, but not restricted to, end of life visits.**

More detailed guidance on undertaking risk assessments is under development.

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.

# Coronavirus control plan: Alert levels in Wales for social care services



## Alert level 1 – Low risk

**Below 50 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

**This level represents the closest to normality we are likely to experience until the summer and the widespread roll-out of vaccines.**

### **At this alert level we might expect to see:**

- All new infections being reported can be accounted for by contact tracing teams.
- Low levels of community transmission and no evidence of wider transmission.
- Minimal introduction of infection into closed settings (such as care homes, schools, and prisons).
- Sustained low incidence rates.
- Slightly higher incidence rates may be tolerable if explained by outbreaks being understood and managed.



## Alert level 2 – Medium risk

**Confirmed cases between 50 and 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

**This level includes additional controls to ensure sustained low incidence (consistent with alert level one). These may be complemented by more targeted local restrictions put in place by incident management teams (IMTs) and others to manage specific incidents or outbreaks.**

### **At this alert level we might expect to see:**

- Almost all new infections reported are responded to by contact tracing teams.
- NHS Wales Test Trace Protect evidence shows, while the majority of cases can be accounted for, there is emerging evidence of onward transmission from previously identified risks.
- There is increasing introduction of infections in closed settings, such as care homes, and in the community.

Likely to be multiple clusters and increased community transmission.



## Alert level 3 – High risk

**Confirmed cases over 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

**This represents the strictest restrictions short of a firebreak or lockdown. At this alert level, the restrictions at alert level two and supportive local actions are no longer effective in containing the growth of the virus or a wider spread.**

### **At this alert level we might expect to see:**

- Not all new infections are being investigated.
- Resources are targeting clusters and incidents in high risk settings (for example care homes).
- Widespread community transmission evidenced by number of small household and social clusters which cannot be linked.
- Significant impact on closed settings.
- Numerous cases which are linked to workplaces.
- Hospital admissions increasing on a trajectory that would lead to unsustainable levels and care homes in red, delaying discharge and causing bottlenecks.
- Incidence rates in over 60s increasing.



## Alert level 4 – Very high risk

**Confirmed cases over 300 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

**Restrictions at this level would be equivalent to a firebreak or lockdown.**

### **At this alert level we might expect to see:**

- Very high or exponential growth of cases with widespread introduction into closed settings.
- NHS Wales Test Trace Protect is prioritising the most vulnerable, and backward contact tracing is no longer feasible as there are too many cases.
- Epidemiological review shows random spread of virus across Wales without a comprehensive understanding of transmission drivers.
- Evidence that national and local mitigating measures no longer proving effective.
- Health and social care under significant pressure and not sustainable, elective procedures are being cancelled across the board and capacity limits reached or about to be breached.

# All health and social care staff to use effective infection prevention & control measures including social distancing, hand hygiene, correct and appropriate use of PPE.

## Visiting to adult care homes (if not subject to ongoing incident)



### Alert level 1 – Low risk

**Below 50 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Risk assessed indoor and outdoor visits to care homes can take place.
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- Visitor testing is **not required**.
- Two designated indoor visitors (a deputy visitor to be designated in the event that one of the designated indoor visitors is unable to fulfil this role. The two roles not intended to be routinely interchangeable).
- Risk assessed visits to outdoor venues can take place
- Risk assessed visits to public settings with appropriate control measures in place can take place e.g. café (groups less than six)
- Risk assessed visits to private homes can take place (groups less than six)



### Alert level 2 – Medium risk

**Confirmed cases between 50 and 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Risk assessed indoor and outdoor visits to care homes can take place.
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- Designated indoor visitors to care homes **will be subject to testing** (LFD).
- Two designated indoor visitors
- (a deputy visitor to be designated in the event that one of the designated indoor visitors is unable to fulfil this role. The two roles not intended to be routinely interchangeable).
- Risk assessed visits to outdoor venues can take place
- Risk assessed visits to public settings with appropriate control measures in place can take place e.g. café (groups less than three)



### Alert level 3 – High risk

**Confirmed cases over 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Risk assessed indoor and outdoor visits to care homes can take place.
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- Designated indoor visitors to care homes **will be subject to testing** (LFD).
- One designated indoor visitor (a deputy visitor to be designated in the event that the designated indoor visitor is unable to fulfil this role. The two roles not intended to be routinely interchangeable).
- Risk assessed visits to outdoor venues can take place which could be accompanied by other care home residents and staff or the designated visitor.



### Alert level 4 – Very high risk

**Confirmed cases over 300 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- General indoor visiting **not advised** other than in exceptional circumstances including, but not restricted to, end of life.
- Risk assessed outdoor visits to care homes can take place.
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- One designated outdoor visitor (a deputy visitor to be designated in the event that the designated visitor is unable to fulfil this role. The two roles not intended to be routinely interchangeable).

## Visiting to adult care homes (if not subject to ongoing incident) continued...



- 14 days isolation on return to the care home will be subject to risk assessment.



- Risk assessed visits to private homes can take place (groups less than three)
- 14 days isolation on return to the care home will be subject to risk assessment.



- Risk assessed indoor visits to public places can take place which could be accompanied by other care home residents and staff or the designated visitor.
- 14 days isolation on return to the care home will be subject to risk assessment.
- Indoor visits to private homes should not normally take place. If they do take place, the resident should be cared for in isolation for 14 days on return to the care home.



- Visitor pods and similar enclosed spaces which include a complete physical barrier (wall to wall and floor to ceiling) between visitor and resident, where the two areas are separate and self-contained with separate entrances (with the visitor entrance direct from the outside) and which do not allow the exchange of air from one side to another can be used for visits by the designated visitor.
- **Testing not required for outdoor visitors.**
- Risk assessed visits to outdoor venues can take place which could be accompanied by care home residents or staff.
- Risk assessed indoor visits to public places or private homes should not normally take place. If they do take place, the resident should be cared for in isolation for 14 days on return to the care home.

## Regular Asymptomatic Testing for Adult Health and Social Care Staff



### Alert level 1 – Low risk

**Below 50 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Testing for care home staff (**fortnightly**)
- Testing for defined supported living staff (**fortnightly**)
- Retesting of positive asymptomatic cases
- Testing for visiting professionals to care homes such as community health and care workers and inspectors – **not required**
- Testing of domiciliary care staff - **not required**
- Agency staff to be tested in line with the policy of the setting they are working.



### Alert level 2 – Medium risk

**Confirmed cases between 50 and 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Testing for care home staff (**fortnightly or weekly – agreed by IMT**)
- Testing for defined supported living staff (**fortnightly or weekly**)
- Retesting of positive asymptomatic cases.
- Testing for visiting professionals to care homes such as community health and care workers and inspectors **may be introduced by IMT**
- Testing of domiciliary care staff **may be introduced by IMT**
- Agency staff may be tested in line with the policy of the setting they are working in (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home) Restricted movement of staff between settings.



### Alert level 3 – High risk

**Confirmed cases over 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Testing for care home staff (**weekly**)
- Testing for defined supported living staff (**weekly**)
- Retesting of positive asymptomatic staff as part of whole home testing
- Testing for visiting professionals to care homes such as community health and social workers and inspectors **is required** (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home)
- Testing for domiciliary care staff will be introduced **required twice weekly** (LFD).
- Agency staff to be tested in line with the policy of the setting they are working in (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home). Restricted movement of staff between settings.



### Alert level 4 – Very high risk

**Confirmed cases over 300 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Testing for care home staff (**weekly**)
- Testing for defined supported living staff (weekly)
- Retesting of positive asymptomatic staff as part of whole home testing
- Testing for visiting professionals to care homes such as community health and social workers and inspectors **is required** (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home)
- Testing for domiciliary care staff will be introduced **required twice weekly** (LFD).
- Agency staff to be tested in line with the policy of the setting they are working in (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home). Restricted movement of staff between settings.

## Children's Residential Care



### Alert level 1 – Low risk

**Below 50 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Staff testing **not required**
- Risk assessed visiting to children's care homes can be supported for groups of not more than five.
- Risk assessed visiting out from children's care homes can be supported in line with level 4 guidance.



### Alert level 2 – Medium risk

**Confirmed cases between 50 and 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Asymptomatic testing of staff may be introduced (**fortnightly or weekly**)
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- Indoor visiting to children's care homes can be supported for up to two designated visitors (or a deputy).
- Risk assessed outdoor visits can take place
- Risk assessed visiting out from children's care homes.



### Alert level 3 – High risk

**Confirmed cases over 150 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Staff testing (**weekly**)
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- Indoor visiting to children's care homes can be supported for one designated visitor (or deputy).
- Testing for visiting professionals to care homes such as community health and social workers and inspectors **is required** (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home)
- Risk assessed outdoor visits can be supported.
- Visiting out from children's care homes to public indoor settings, e.g. café, shopping in line with level 3 general guidance.
- Risk assessed visiting indoors in private homes e.g. to family can be supported subject to risk assessment, including the need for isolation on return.



### Alert level 4 – Very high risk

**Confirmed cases over 300 cases a day per 100,000 people over 7 days**

- Staff testing (**weekly**)
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- Indoor visiting to children's care homes not advised. Indoor visiting only advised in exceptional circumstances subject to testing (LFD)
- Testing for visiting professionals to care homes such as community health and social workers and inspectors **is required** (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home)
- Risk assessed outdoor visits can be supported.
- Visiting out in line with level 4 general guidance.