



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

---

## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

---

**TITLE** Further update to Hospital visiting during the Coronavirus outbreak: guidance – June 2021

**DATE** 18 June 2021

**BY** Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services

The Welsh Government is publishing revised NHS Wales Hospital Visiting Guidance that will come into force on 5 July 2021. This supersedes previously published Guidance of 25 March, 20 April, 20 July and 30 November.

I expect all requests for visiting in healthcare settings to be treated with compassion and empathy whilst ensuring the patient's best interests are met and local risk assessment processes are followed.

The risk of nosocomial transmission (transmission in a healthcare setting) remains high, particularly in light of the more transmissible Delta variant. The revised Guidance does not expect health providers to relax all visiting restrictions at present but recognises that a balance is required. It reinforces the principle of local decision making based on local conditions.

The Guidance is clear that it cannot foresee all requests for visiting and contains an exceptionality provision to allow requests for visiting that are outside the categories listed in the Guidance to be considered taking into account individual circumstances, but still following local risk assessment processes.

The accompanying Supplementary Statement allows providers to depart from the Guidance in response to rising or falling levels of coronavirus transmission. In order to ensure some continuity, individual NHS bodies have been asked to make such decisions after taking advice from Public Health Wales.

A new annex aims to give health providers an aid to decision making when considering the use of particular COVID-19 tests to support hospital visiting. The annex has been developed by the Welsh Government Nosocomial Transmission Group and states that COVID-19 testing may be considered by health providers for visitors to hospitals as part of a risk assessed approach.

Testing can help to identify people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus. Those who test positive must immediately self-isolate to avoid passing the virus on to others.

The principles make it clear the use of testing for hospital visitors is to be determined at a local level. Implementation of the 'hierarchy of controls' including protocols and procedures for social distancing, environmental cleaning and infection prevention and control, including PPE remain the principal ways of preventing the entry and spread of COVID-19 within health care settings.

The guidance recognises the special circumstances of parents in neonatal and paediatric settings, and partners of women in maternity services. The principle of local risk assessment still applies and it is recognised that there may be a useful role for regular lateral flow testing to facilitate access for partner and/or parent support throughout pregnancy/ birth/ postnatal and in provision of support to children. There could also be opportunities to utilise Point Of Care devices to test parents and partners.

Parents of children in hospital and pregnant women and their identified support partner in maternity services are now able to access LFD test packs by collecting test kits from their closest community collection point or by ordering test kits direct to their home.

The Welsh Government recognises that restrictions on visiting can impact adversely on patients and their loved ones and staff. The health, safety and wellbeing of patients, communities and health care provider staff remains an absolute priority. Of course, virtual visiting in healthcare settings continues to be encouraged and supported where possible.

The Guidance and accompanying Supplementary Statement is being kept under review and can be found here: [Hospital visiting during the coronavirus outbreak: guidance | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/hospital-visiting-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak-guidance)