

## **NHS Wales Welsh Partnership Forum**

### **Joint Statement on protecting colleagues, patients and ourselves during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic**

The Welsh Partnership Forum partners have developed this joint statement to emphasise and re-inforce the steps we all need to follow to keep colleagues, patients and ourselves safe and protected during the Covid-19 pandemic. We want to ensure that everyone remains safe at this time of escalating Coronavirus cases, and critically ensure that we do not inadvertently spread the virus between staff or between staff and patients, where this can be avoided. Trade union partners have been developing information and policies with Welsh Government and NHS Wales Employers throughout the pandemic to ensure that staff wellbeing and safety is maintained at all times. Trade Union colleagues have also been working with clinicians, as part of the Nosocomial Transmission Group, to ensure all clinical and health board advice, where relevant, is produced in partnership.

Despite your best efforts, unfortunately hospital transmission is increasing. Therefore, we urge staff and organisations to ensure they are following the basic measures they need to take to protect themselves, colleagues and patients. We endorse the Nosocomial Transmission Group's efforts to limit the hospital spread, in patients and staff, and the subsequent harm

Key messages that the WPF partners want to remind staff and organisations of are:

1. **Maintain physical distancing.** We know undertaking physical distancing measures helps limit the spread of coronavirus. Organisations have a duty to provide safe and adequate facilities that allows for physical distancing. This is particularly important in confined spaces such as offices and communal rest / break areas.
2. **Maintain good hand hygiene measures.**
3. **Wear a three layer face covering in indoor public spaces within health care settings** This includes all public and communal areas such as canteens, changing rooms, waiting rooms, corridors and entrance areas unless you are able to maintain 2 metre physical distance at all times.
4. All health and social care staff **within 2 metres of a patient must wear an apron, gloves, fluid repellent surgical mask plus eye protection where anyone is likely to cough or sneeze.** Patients can also be encouraged to wear a face covering if it does not impact their clinical condition.
5. **Avoid where possible sharing vehicle journeys with colleagues.** These should only occur where they cannot be avoided and when delivery of joint care is of vital importance. If these cannot be avoided then both parties should wear fluid resistant surgical masks, ventilate the car, maintain hand hygiene and have cleaning equipment available for the driver to clean surfaces. (a risk assessment should be completed).

It is important, that as staff, we ensure we follow these basics. But it is just as important that organisations take measures that facilitate these measure being taken and these are set out by the Nosocomial Transmission Group documents but also the Welsh Health Circular/2020/019, which can be found at <https://gov.wales/health-and-wellbeing-support-nhs-health-boards-and-trusts-workforce-whc2020019> .



Of similar relevance is the 'NHS Trade Unions blueprint for the return of services' which includes the requirement that healthcare organisations will 'Ensure that proper risk assessments are carried out for all staff – to apply social distancing, to help avoid contact with Covid-19 wherever possible and to manage that contact safely when there is no alternative.' The document may be found at the link <https://www.unison-ni.org.uk/sites/default/files/Blueprint.pdf>