# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Hospital visiting during the Coronavirus outbreak: guidance – November 2020** |
| **DATE** | **30 November 2020** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The Welsh Government is publishing revised NHS Wales Hospital Visiting Guidance that will come into force on 30 November 2020. This supersedes previously published Guidance of 25 March, 20 April and 20 July.

The revised Guidance comprises two parts; a Supplementary Statement and the main Guidance.

The Supplementary Statement states that the Guidance sets out the baseline for visiting in Wales during the pandemic but allows health providers to depart from the Guidance:

1. in response to rising levels of covid-19 transmission in their localities, including levels which result in a national lockdown and/or evidence of nosocomial transmission in a particular setting; or
2. falling levels of transmission in their local area.

This flexibility is necessary due to the changing picture of coronavirus transmission across Wales, with significant variations in community transmission across different parts of Wales and differences in the rate of nosocomial transmission. Importantly, the Statement maintains that all decisions to depart from the main Guidance should be made by the health care providers’ Executive Teams in collaboration with their local infection prevention and control teams and Public Health Wales. The priority must continue to be the protection of the health, safety and wellbeing of patients, communities and healthcare provider staff.

Annex 2 of the main Guidance that relates to maternity services, has been amended after listening to women and families and consulting with Heads of Midwifery and Sonography/Radiography Services.  The amendments to Annex 2 of the Guidance now provide a risk assessed methodology for health boards to determine the local maternity visiting for partners to accompany pregnant women and new mothers. This risk assessed approach should be taken in collaboration with relevant health professionals, local infection prevention and control teams and Public Health Wales

There have also been a few minor amendments to the main Guidance as follows:

* The recognition that some people may require an essential support assistant for specific additional support eg a support worker or interpreter. Essential support assistants are not to be classed as visitors in the traditional sense. In some circumstances, where they receive care and support from a family member or partner, they may nominate this person as their essential support assistant.
* The inclusion of persons with ‘dementia’ in those patients permitted one visitor at a time.
* Update to current Welsh Government guidelines on face coverings and face masks.

The Welsh Government recognises that restrictions on visiting can impact adversely both on patients and their loved ones. 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 (including the Supplementary Statement) is being kept under review, and can be found here: [https://gov.wales/hospital-visiting-during-coronavirus-outbreak-guidance](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fhospital-visiting-during-coronavirus-outbreak-guidance&data=04%7C01%7CTeresa.Bridge%40gov.wales%7C9273f5f950a547fa739c08d892d39240%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637420784670048393%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=pHfFYvWsPnecCvqFA1LoZMDapbLeemlmAVmxcdROoHQ%3D&reserved=0)