



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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To Managers of nursing and residential homes
in Wales

Dear Manager,

Minimising harm to residents when flu is circulating

Further to the communication from Public Health Wales on 15 January and the re-circulation of the guidance *The Influenza Campaign: A guide for care home managers and staff* we write to remind you of the key actions to take in order to minimise harm to residents when flu is circulating.

1. **Isolate.** If you suspect a resident has an influenza-like-illness (ILI) you need to isolate the resident to reduce the risk of further spread to others (irrespective of whether other residents have been vaccinated or not). A person is generally considered to be a risk to others for 5 days after symptoms start. Any staff with ILI should be excluded from work.
2. **Contact GP to assess cases.** Early treatment together with good infection control practice is the most effective way to prevent flu spreading. The GP may take a throat swab to confirm the diagnosis in symptomatic residents or staff.
3. **Notify outbreak to local health protection team (HPT).** You have an outbreak if you have two or more cases of ILI (or alternatively two or more cases of laboratory confirmed Influenza) within the same 48-hour period in your home. At this stage it is important to notify the health protection team. The HPT will help you assess the likelihood of ILI, the severity and extent of the outbreak, and advise on control measures such as closure to new admissions, options for infection control including restriction of visitors or isolation of residents etc.
4. **Notify outbreak to GP.** While it is important that all residents with symptoms of ILI are reported to their GP so that they can be treated promptly, it is just as important that GPs have the opportunity to assess whether some residents in the home would benefit from receiving antivirals as a precaution to help prevent infection or reduce the severity of symptoms if further spread has occurred. Health Boards have been issued with a Directed Enhanced Service from Welsh Government to support GPs in doing this work.



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5. **Inform hospital infection control if appropriate.** If you have an outbreak of ILI in your home, and a resident requires admission to hospital for any reason, even if not related to ILI, then the infection control at the hospital should be informed that there is an outbreak.
6. **Monitor for further cases.** Check all residents daily for elevated temperatures and other respiratory symptoms. It is important to identify ill residents as early as possible in order to isolate and treat appropriately.

The HPT are available to discuss possible outbreaks with you. To contact them ring: 0300 00 300 32.

The Influenza Campaign: A guide for care home managers and staff [[English](#) / [Welsh](#)] is a good practice guide for care homes that has been developed in Wales and is a very useful resource.

Yours sincerely

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- cc. All General Practitioners
GPC Wales
All Community Pharmacists
Care Inspectorate Wales
Public Health Wales
Health Board Nurse Directors
Health Board Directors of Public Health
Local Authority Directors of Social Services