



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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

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**TITLE**        **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

**DATE**        **13 March 2020**

**BY**            **Vaughan Gething AM, Minister for Health and Social Services**

As we move in our preparations from the “contain” to the “delay” phase of COVID-19, it is vital that our health and social care system in Wales is prepared. I have taken a number of decisions today to ensure early and decisive action to continue to provide care and support to the most vulnerable people in our communities, whilst also making sure organisations and professionals are supported to make timely preparations for the expected increase in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19. I am choosing to act now before we see a significant surge in demand so that our services can be ready to act. A larger number of people requiring high levels of care is highly likely over the coming weeks.

I have taken advice from professional colleagues, including NHS Chief Executives and Medical Directors to inform my decision to act now to ensure our preparations can be made in a planned and measured way. I have therefore agreed a framework of actions, within which local health and social care providers can make decisions:

1. Suspend non-urgent outpatient appointments and ensure urgent appointments are prioritised
2. Suspend non-urgent surgical admissions and procedures (whilst ensuring access for emergency and urgent surgery)
3. Prioritise use of Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services to focus on hospital discharge and ambulance emergency response
4. Expedite discharge of vulnerable patients from acute and community hospitals
5. Relax targets and monitoring arrangements across the health and care system
6. Minimise regulation requirements for health and care settings
7. Fast track placements to care homes by suspending the current protocol which gives the right to a choice of home
8. Permission to cancel internal and professional events, including study leave, to free up staff for preparations.
9. Relaxation of contract and monitoring arrangements for GPs and primary care practitioners.
10. Suspend NHS emergency service and health volunteer support to mass gatherings and events