1 Introduction

This guidance is intended for Public Health Wales, local authorities, local health boards and registered providers of care homes or supported living arrangements where people share communal facilities.

2 Admission of residents

The care sector looks after many of the most vulnerable people in our society. In this pandemic, we appreciate that care home providers are first and foremost looking after the people in their care, and doing so while some of their staff are absent due to sickness or isolation requirements. As part of the national effort, the care sector also plays a vital role in accepting patients as they are discharged from hospital – both because recuperation is better in non-acute settings, and because hospitals need to have enough beds to treat acutely sick patients. Residents may also be admitted to a care home from a home setting. Some of these patients may have COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic. All of these patients can be safely cared for in a care home if this guidance is followed.

If an individual has no COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 but is no longer showing symptoms and has completed their isolation period, then care should be provided as normal.

Guidance has been issued on discharge from hospital. The discharging hospital will clarify with care homes the COVID-19 status of an individual and any COVID-19 symptoms, during the process of transfer from a hospital to the care home. Public Health Wales will assist residential settings and hospital discharge teams in risk assessing whether it is safe and appropriate for an individual to return to a care setting (0300 00 300 32).

Tests will primarily be given to:

- all patients in critical care for pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) or flu like illness

- all other patients requiring admission to hospital for pneumonia, ARDS or flu like illness

- where an outbreak has occurred in a residential or care setting, for example long-term care facility or prisons.[1]

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[1] Further guidance on testing can be found online:
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-testing.