



COVID-19 UPDATE

According to the powers that be there is light at the end of the tunnel – which is where we all breathe a sigh of relief and hope with all our hearts that this is true.

This will be a significant week in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. PM Boris Johnson is expected to deliver a “roadmap” to easing lockdown restrictions this weekend; the time has not been disclosed but will, most probably be around 4p.m. on Sunday 11 May. It is not clear how much of the detail of the PM’s speech will apply to Wales.

Trials begin on a coronavirus app which ministers have said will save lives and help lift Britain out of lockdown. If the tests are successful it could be rolled out across the country within weeks.

More information is available on Wales Online:

www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health/contact-tracing-app-coronavirus-wales-18197438

Patient Shielding Letters (COVID19)

Extremely Vulnerable - High Risk Individuals

You will have received a 'shielding' letter from the Welsh Government's Chief Medical Officer (Dr Frank Atherton) as you are considered extremely vulnerable. You should isolate at home for 12 weeks and not go out, due to greatly impaired immune system.

What is in the shielding letter?

The shielding letter advises people to stay at home for 12 weeks and contains a range of further information and advice, including how those who have no-one else to support them can get medication and other essential items such as food. Welsh Government has also published information on their website about support for extremely vulnerable people:

- <https://gov.wales/get-coronavirus-support-extremely-vulnerable-person>
- <https://gov.wales/cmo-letter-extremely-vulnerable-people-support-explained>

These links clearly state that if you are employed, this is proof that you will not be able to go to work while you are shielding and can be shared with your employer. If you are able to, you can work from home, if your job allows it. **You will not need a fit note from the surgery.**

Broader Vulnerable Groups - At Risk Individuals

You are considered to be an at risk individual if you are entitled to receive an annual flu vaccine. Welsh Government will not have proactively contacted you and there is no plan at present to do so. You DO NOT need to stay at home for 12 weeks but should strictly adhere to the social distancing guidance

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-social-distancing-guidance>.

This guidance encourages you to work from home if possible, but that will be a discussion between the you and your employer.

Broader Vulnerable Groups

Broader vulnerable groups who should **strictly follow social distancing guidance that are NOT being issued a shielding letter are those in the at Risk Group**. This group has been identified to the public as those who are:

1. aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
2. under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
3. chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
4. chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
5. chronic kidney disease
6. chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
7. chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
8. diabetes
9. problems with the spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
10. a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
11. being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)
12. those who are pregnant

This wider group, who broadly speaking comprise the criteria of adults eligible for an annual flu vaccine, will not be proactively contacted but have instead been asked to take steps to reduce their social interactions in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus.

Guidance on social distancing can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-social-distancing-guidance>



Our thanks to Sue for the tremendous amount of work she has done on behalf of the **Loneliness Project and Covid Response** projects. Followers of the **POBL** Twitter account now number approximately 100. Sue has been able to assist many people by introducing them to various activity

groups in Barry; the demand for such information demonstrates the need for community groups of this nature.

Trials are on-going for virtual meetings using ZOOM. In the current climate it may not be possible to hold the monthly PPG meetings and members have been looking at other options to get together. As a result the scheduled May meeting will be a virtual meeting. **Please note that among other matters we will be voting for officers and would like to see as many members as possible joining via Zoom. (See Bev's email of 1st May 2020.)**



Next Zoom Meeting : Monday 26 May 2020 at 14:00



Practice Manager, Gareth Thomas updated members on the response to the pandemic so far, by West Quay MC. Although it has been necessary to suspend certain clinics, it was necessary in order to enable urgent medical issues and concerns to be addressed safely and as a priority.

There was concern that some patients were reluctant to contact their GP because of Covid-19. A new way of working is in place but patient medical care continues as before.

GVS have produced a document entitled **Third Sector Services Available, Updated 30th April 2020.** The document comprises 17 pages, therefore because of its length it has not been reproduced in this newsletter. For the full document please refer to the GVS website:



<https://www.gvs.wales/media/6312/public-third-sector-service-available.pdf>

The following website

<http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1143/CEO%20CONNECTS%20weekly%2028%20april%20%28002%29.pdf>



contains a Bulletin from the Chief Executive of Cardiff & Vale Health Board, Len Richards, the Bulletin is aimed at reassuring patients that GP surgeries are open for business and that no one should be put off from contacting/visiting their GP if they are worried. The bulletin covers a wide spectrum of health issues in clear no nonsense language. Because of its length the bulletin has not been included in this newsletter.

The **Older People's Commissioner for Wales** has established a public Facebook group to allow older people, their families and those working with their families and those working with and for them. It is a space to connect and chat, ask questions, share information and find out more about help and support that is available. To join or see the information on the group visit – [Together we are stronger: Coronavirus information and discussion](#) group page on **Facebook**.

Please note that although some clinics have been closed temporarily, the practice is still fully contactable by patients with serious concerns about their health.

TAKE CARE KEEP SAFE