

# Winter Preparedness Information for Wirral Care Home Managers

---

Health Protection Service

This year, we face a difficult winter with Covid-19 circulating alongside other respiratory viruses, including seasonal flu, and also viral stomach infections (such as norovirus). Being vaccinated and maintaining simple infection prevention and control (IPC) practices will help reduce the spread of respiratory infections and gastrointestinal viruses within care homes.

### 5 simple steps for managers to keep care homes safe this winter

- 1** Support your **staff** to **get vaccinated for flu and Covid**
- 2** Ensure your **staff test** for covid **when symptomatic**
- 3** **Support symptomatic and unwell** staff to stay at home
- 4** **Reinforce** the importance of infection prevention and control **precautions to all staff**
- 5** **Review and update** your business continuity plan

Prevention measures including hand hygiene, testing, standard IPC precautions, and use of personal protective equipment (PPE), are still essential to stop transmission and prevent outbreaks in care homes. **Managers have a duty of care to keep care home staff and residents safe.**

---







### Be proactive. Take the following actions to protect care home residents and staff this winter:

1	<p>Familiarise yourself with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UKHSA Acute Respiratory Infection Resource Pack for Care Homes</li> <li>- <a href="#">COVID-19 supplement to the infection prevention and control resource for adult social care</a> and <a href="#">Coronavirus testing for adult social care services</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">National Infection prevention and control manual for England</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Guidance for managing norovirus outbreaks in acute and community health and social care</a> and <a href="#">Outbreaks of norovirus in care homes</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Cold weather plan: action card for provider organisations</a></li> </ul>	✓
2	Review sick leave policies and occupational health support for staff as per UKHSA <a href="#">guidance</a> .	✓
3	Ensure ALL staff and residents have been offered their <b>Covid-19 and seasonal influenza vaccine</b> in partnership with the General Practice/Community Pharmacy. Both vaccines will be offered as per national guidance.	✓
4	Ensure your visiting policy is up to date and in line with national guidance and local arrangements.	✓
5	Review, update and circulate business continuity and emergency plans among staff for their awareness. Ensure that plans include actions/arrangements during severe weather plan and surge.	✓
6	Ensure care home infection control policies are up to date, read and accessible for all staff.	✓
7	Maintain a central record of all residents' vaccination status and latest <b>kidney function</b> test to support antiviral prescribing in the event of an influenza outbreak. <i>A template is in the UKHSA Acute Respiratory Infection Resource Pack for Care Homes.</i>	✓
8	Familiarise yourself with <b>antiviral pathway</b> arrangements in and out of hours and make sure that the care home can put actions in place if advised to do so.	✓
9	Nominate staff members to act as the Acute Respiratory Infection/Norovirus coordinators to manage working practices and care home environment on every shift.	✓
10	Educate and reinforce <a href="#">5 moments of hand hygiene</a> and hand hygiene product choice amongst all staff and remember, during outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness, to promote the use of soap and water as alcohol gel will not kill bugs like norovirus and Clostridioides difficile (C.diff).	✓
11	Ensure that sufficient <b>personal protective equipment (PPE)</b> is available for staff, <b>placed in appropriate dispensers</b> , and that staff are trained in its safe use and disposal.	✓
12	Ensure Covid-19 testing kits are available and accessible, stored appropriately and staff are aware of ordering testing kits through <a href="#">the GOV.UK portal</a> .	✓
13	Ensure staff are competent in obtaining nasopharyngeal swabs (Viral swabs) as per <a href="#">guidance</a> .	✓
14	Educate and reinforce <b>hand and respiratory hygiene</b> to all staff, residents and visitors.	✓

## Winter Preparedness information for Wirral Care Homes

15	Ensure <b>cleaning</b> and disinfection products are available to include a chlorine-based product (1000 ppm). Increase the frequency and intensity of cleaning for all areas (in increased incidents of infection/outbreak), focusing on shared spaces and frequently touched surfaces. Ensure appropriate linen and waste management systems are in place.	✓
16	Consider ventilating rooms after a visit from someone outside the setting, or if anyone in the care setting has suspected or confirmed COVID-19, where possible. The comfort and wishes of the person receiving care should be considered in all circumstances. During severe cold weather, ensure that rooms, particularly living rooms and bedrooms, are kept warm and that staff are taking appropriate action to protect residents.	✓
17	Educate staff on early recognition of outbreaks and reporting processes.	✓
18	Proactively ask staff if they are feeling well at the beginning of each shift.	✓
19	Consider how you would cohort in the event of an infectious disease Outbreak. For example, try to limit staff movement between facilities, where care homes are part of a group, and within settings, if possible.	✓
20	Ensure Isolation/Outbreak signage is available and displayed in an Outbreak situation.	✓
21	If an outbreak is suspected, you should contact the <b>Community Infection Prevention and Control team in hours</b> (Monday to Friday 9-5pm) via 0151 604 7750 / <a href="mailto:ipc.wirralct@nhs.net">ipc.wirralct@nhs.net</a> or <b>UKHSA HPT</b> out of hours via 0151 434 4819.	✓
22	Keep NHS Capacity Tracker updated.	✓
23	Encourage staff and residents to keep hydrated*. Consider implementing protected drinks time throughout the day in care homes, display <a href="#">hydration poster</a> in the back of toilets' door and offer hydration leaflets to staff, residents and visitors. Please contact <a href="mailto:healthprotectionservice@wirral.gov.uk">healthprotectionservice@wirral.gov.uk</a> to request printed hydration materials.  <small>*(If advised to restrict fluid intake by a healthcare professional follow this advice)</small>	✓
24	Ensure you are aware of the cold weather alert system and plans are in place to be activated if needed	✓

### Useful resources:

'Alcohol Gel... how, when and why' Informational Poster	 AlcoholGelPoster_A4.pdf
'Bare Below the Elbow' Poster	 BareBelowPoster.pdf
IPC Hand Hygiene Poster (September 22)	 IPC_HandWashingPoster (sept 22).pdf
Outbreak Signage Poster	 outbreak_signage_poster.pdf
Flu Poster for Care Homes	 Flu_Poster_for_care-homes_.pdf
Flu and Covid-19 vaccination poster for staff	 2022.09.14_Winter_Vaccine_Flu+Covid_Cai



**Get vaccinated.  
Wash your hands.  
Test if symptomatic.**

**Stay Safe this Winter.**

**Keep Wirral Well** 