Easy read letter

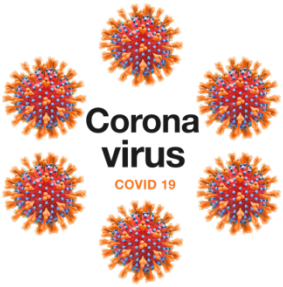
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

To staff working in health services:
Health Board Chief Executives
Medical Directors
Directors of Nursing
Directors of Therapies and Healthcare Scientists

From:
Dr Frank Atherton, **Chief Medical Officer** and
Professor Jean White CBE, **Chief Nursing Officer**

Date:
17 April 2020

On 12 April 2020 we wrote a letter to health staff about new guidance for health services.



The aim of the guidance is to help health staff make decisions about how to care for people in this difficult time of coronavirus.

Staff were asked to share the guidance to make sure everyone knows about it.

You can read the guidance here: https://gov.wales/coronavirus-ethical-values-and-principles-healthcare-delivery-framework-0

You can also read what Welsh Government Ministers said about the guidance here: https://gov.wales/written-statement-statement-work-covid19-moral-and-ethical-guidance-wales-cmeag-wales-advisory

Some organisations that work with disabled people and people with a learning disability, are worried about how health staff might make decisions in this time of coronavirus.

On 13 April the **Disability Reference Group** wrote a statement about the rights of disabled people in Wales in this time of coronavirus.

More than 1 thousand people and organisations signed to say they agreed with the statement.

You can read the statement on **Learning Disability Wales'** website here: https://www.ldw.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-and-the-rights-of-disabled-people-in-wales/

The **Older People's Commissioner** is also worried about the health care that some older people might get in this time of coronavirus.

You can read the **Older People's Commissioner's** statement here: https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/news/news/20-04-06/Treatment_decisions_and_Do_Not_Attempt_CPR_Protecting_people_s_rights.aspx

Some people have been asked to sign forms that say health staff will **not** try to save their life if their heart stops.

This is called a **Do Not Attempt CPR** or **DNACPR** form.

We do **not** think that health staff are deciding not to try to save people just because they are older or have a disability.

But we want to make sure everyone understands how a decision like this **should** be made. We are writing this letter to make it clear to everyone.

Health staff should **never** decide not to try to save someone's life **just** because of their:

- age
- disability or
- long term health condition.

Any decision not to try to save someone's life should be about that person and their individual needs.

Health staff should **always** talk to the person or their family about the decision.

Health staff should **never** decide not to try to save the lives of a **group** of people. For example disabled people or people with dementia.

On 20 March the **National Institute for Clinical Excellence** or **NICE** sent out guidance on health care for adults who are ill with coronavirus.

On 9 April NICE sent out more guidance about the tool that health staff are using to decide how to treat people with coronavirus.

This is because the tool does **not** work well for:

- Younger people
- People with a learning disability
- People with autism
- People with some long term health conditions like cerebral palsy.

This letter will also be sent to charities and organisations working in Wales.

From
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Chief Medical Officer and

Professor Jean White CBE,
Chief Nursing Officer.