



**Euro-Pacific
Partnerships Ltd**

Living Brand Safety

BRYN MELYN CARE Pandemic Crisis Policy

(Coronavirus/ Covid-19) – V5

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to advise staff about the precautions needed when dealing with a pandemic outbreak and to ensure a timely and integrated response to a pandemic. This policy takes into account the guidance given from both the UK Department of Health and Social Care, NHS and World Health Organisation.

1.2 Scope

This policy contains guidelines, which will be adapted as necessary, for members of staff, parents, guardians, service users and pupils.

At all times advice of the Government in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS will be adhered to.

It is recognised this advice may change on a daily basis, so the onus is on Bryn Melyn to ensure they are up to date with latest requirements. This will be supported by Environmental Health Consultants , Euro Pacific Partnerships.

A Bryn Melyn Home is treated as a domestic residential home for purposes of this policy

1.3 Purpose

It is intended to help mitigate the effects of the pandemic on service users and staff by doing the following:

- reduce the spread of pandemic virus;
- limit the morbidity and mortality from pandemic virus;
- protect service users, pupils, staff and visitors against its effects where possible;
- set out clear actions to be performed by staff in the event of a pandemic;
- provide added detail and context to assist with the delivery of critical services;
- provide guidance on vaccination if and when suitable vaccines become available;
- assist a return to normality with the resumption of normal services as quickly as possible;
- ensure measures are taken to maintain essential resources including access to pharmaceuticals and other treatments
- coordinate communication messages to existing service users, pupils and their families and guardians.
- The Plan describes the actions taken in the preparation and response to, and recovery from a pandemic.

With unpredictable frequency, new virus subtypes emerge and may cause a future pandemic. When it emerges, it is likely a new viral strain will spread rapidly across the world, affecting large numbers of the population with little or no immunity. Until the event occurs, its impact will remain unknown.

Any response to a pandemic must be flexible and proportionate. It is important that Bryn Melyn's planning builds on currently developed business continuity arrangements, while addressing the specific issues which might emerge during a pandemic.

Public Health England (PHE) is the expert national public health agency. PHE's first function is to fulfill the Secretary of State's duty to protect the public's health from infectious diseases and other public health hazards. The threat from pandemic virus remains the top national risk and PHE has a core and critical role working with its local and national partners, in preparing for and responding to the pandemic.

1.4 Useful References

It is recommended daily consultation with the public guidance on Coronavirus / Covid-19 is undertaken to ensure <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Additional useful information specifically regarding schools can be found at <https://gov.wales/guidance-educational-settings-about-covid-19>, whilst this is in Wales, it is all relevant and applicable.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

(Please refresh these links once entered so you get the most up to date information)

2.0 Background

2.1 What is a pandemic?

A pandemic has the following characteristics:

- It is a global disease outbreak
- Occurs when a new virus emerges
- People have little or no immunity
- There is no vaccine
- It spreads easily from person to person
- It causes serious illness
- It can spread across the country and around the world quickly
- No matter where it starts everyone around the world is at threat

2.2 How does it spread?

It spreads by inhalation of airborne droplets released by the coughing and sneezing of an infected person. It is spread by breathing in air containing the virus or by contaminated hands, and is highly infectious. It mainly affects the nose, throat and lungs. It is also spread by touching contaminated objects or people, then touching your face

** Please note that infected people will spread the virus for several days before they show symptoms.*

2.3 Coronaviruses

These are a family of viruses common across the world in animals and humans. Certain types cause illnesses in people. For example, some coronaviruses cause the common cold; others cause diseases which are much more severe such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), both of which often lead to pneumonia.

COVID-19 is the illness seen in people infected with a new strain of coronavirus not previously seen in humans. On 31 December 2019, Chinese authorities notified the World Health Organization (WHO) of an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan City, which was later classified as a new disease: COVID-19. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern" (PHEIC). Based on current evidence, the main symptoms of COVID-19 are a cough, a high temperature and, in severe cases, shortness of breath.

As it is a new virus, the lack of immunity in the population (and the absence as yet of an effective vaccine) means that COVID-19 has the potential to spread extensively. The current data seem to show that we are all susceptible to catching this disease, and thus it is also more likely than not that the UK will be significantly affected.

Among those who become infected, some will exhibit no symptoms. Early data suggest that of those who develop an illness, the great majority will have a mild-to-moderate, but self-limiting illness – similar to seasonal flu. It is, however, also clear that a minority of people who get COVID-19 will develop complications severe enough to require hospital care, most often pneumonia. In a small proportion of these, the illness may be severe enough to lead to death. This is a changing scenario as more information is gained about the virus.

So far the data we have suggest that the risk of severe disease and death increases among elderly people and in people with underlying health risk conditions (in the same way as for seasonal flu). Illness is less common and usually less severe in younger adults. Children can be infected and can have a severe illness, but based on current data overall illness seems rarer in people under 20 years of age.

Pregnant women have been placed in the 'vulnerable group' by the Chief Medical Officer. There is no evidence to suggest being pregnant means one is more likely to get coronavirus. However, for a small number of women, it does mean being pregnant may change the way their body handles severe viral infection.

Pregnant women with an underlying health condition, such as asthma or diabetes may be more unwell if they develop the virus. If they have significant heart disease, congenital or acquired, you are considered extremely vulnerable and should follow the government advice regarding 'shielding'. Pregnancy risk assessments should also be completed with this information in mind.

Some of the children in our care may also fall in to the vulnerable group should they have pre-existing conditions and have been advised accordingly by the NHS. It should also be noted that there is a possibility of pregnancy within the female cohort and they should be deemed vulnerable also, with appropriate measures identified in this document taken.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Given that the data are still emerging, we are uncertain of the impact of an outbreak on business. In a stretching scenario, it is possible that up to one-fifth of employees may be absent from work during peak weeks. This may vary for individual businesses.

We do not yet have entirely complete data on this disease. But as we learn more about the virus, its effects and its behaviour (for example, the timing and extent of the peak of an outbreak, its precise impact on individuals), we will be able to revise estimates of its potential spread, severity and impact. We will then review, and (where necessary) adapt this plan accordingly.

Work is in hand to contain the spread of the virus. This includes extensive guidance provided to individuals returning from areas where there are cases being reported, and encouraging self-isolation as the primary means to contain the spread of the disease. Given that there is currently neither a vaccine against COVID-19 nor any specific, proven, antiviral medication, most treatment will therefore be towards managing symptoms and providing support to people with complications. The majority of people with COVID-19 have recovered without the need for any specific treatment, as is the case for the common cold or seasonal flu. We expect that the vast majority of cases will best be managed at home, again as with seasonal colds and flu (**NHS**).

3.0 Declaring a Pandemic

The government judges that one of the highest current risks in the UK is the emergence of a pandemic. A pandemic could occur at any time. The Pandemic virus is almost certain to arise outside the UK. Cases could begin to occur in the UK within one month of the start of the pandemic. Once in the UK, it may spread to most major population centres within weeks.

In June 2013, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published revised pandemic guidance. This has moved away from the six previous clearly delineated pandemic stages, and instead uses a risk-based approach to a pandemic represented as a continuum of global stages (interpandemic, alert, pandemic and transition) that describe the spread of a new viral subtype, taking account of the disease it causes, around the world.

Whilst referring to and recognising the importance of WHO arrangements, the UK response is not completely or solely predicated on a WHO alert and as such is not necessarily reliant on this information to activate NHS pandemic response plans.

As the threat of a Pandemic increases, NHS England may delegate decisions to reduce NHS services to the provision of essential care only, and around the modification of/or suspension of performance targets to local/ regional decision making.

4.0 Infection Prevention and Control

Infection prevention and control standard precautions are fundamental in limiting the transmission of the virus.

At Bryn Melyn applying basic infection prevention and control measures and encouraging compliance with public health advice will contribute to the UK's overall response.

Our preventative measures will include:

- covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- coughing or sneezing crook of the elbow if no tissues available;
- disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully – bagging and binning them;
- washing hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds to reduce the spread of the virus from the hands to the face or to other people, particularly after blowing your nose or disposing of tissues;
- handwashing will take place at least
 - before leaving home (i.e. Bryn Melyn home or family home)
 - on arrival at school
 - after using the toilet
 - after breaks and sporting activities
 - before food preparation
 - before eating any food, including snacks
 - before leaving school
- avoid touching eyes, ears or mouth with unwashed hands;
- making sure staff service users and pupils follow this advice;
- cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. kitchen worktops, door handles, fridge handles, light switches, toilet flushers, television remotes, touch screens, mobile phones, desk top telephones, computer screens and keyboards) frequently using a normal detergent based cleaning product, minimum 60% sanitiser or alcohol wipes in the case of electrical equipment;
- avoiding crowded gatherings where possible, especially in enclosed spaces, no open days or similar events for the duration of the pandemic
- no sharing of plates and drinking vessels
- ensure dishwasher is functioning correctly and any handwashing of cooking utensils, crockery, cutlery, storage containers, condiment containers is done thoroughly in hot soapy water
- Display of signage in prominent locations of the Catch it, Bin it, Kill it message with respect to viruses
- Any provision of hand sanitiser ensures it is minimum 60% alcohol and effective against viruses as opposed to merely anti-bacterial * NB use of alcohol based hand sanitiser needs to be assessed with respect to service users care plan
- Handshaking, kissing and close body contact is discouraged
- Reduce numbers in dining room (not currently an issue)
- Staff who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work
- Make sure that service users know to tell a member of staff if they feel unwell.
- Exclusion of non essential visitors to the home or school regardless of signs of symptoms

Should a member of staff or a service user or pupil feel unwell with the symptoms of the virus we will make provision for an isolation area.

The isolation area will be identified in services risk assessment .

This area is designed for short term only and should ensure that the service user is separated from other service users and staff however be mindful of their individual care plan.

This room will be identified by staff and set aside for this purpose. It will be at least 2 metres away from other people and will have a closable door and an openable window for ventilation.

They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin. The room will need to be deep cleaned once they leave.

If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available.

Should a service user or pupil be diagnosed with pandemic virus, **isolation precautions**, are designed to protect service users, pupils staff and visitors by reducing exposure to potentially pathogenic organisms. It allows our staff to make risk assessments and instigate appropriate precautions based on the transmission route of each particular organism, whilst maintaining as much individualised care as possible.

Once diagnosis is confirmed then the service user should leave the site and be released to parent or guardian.

It is likely that diagnostic tests may be delayed if there is a backlog of testing so isolation should be in place during this period. Self-isolation in individual rooms is the option available and dining in their room.

Upon positive test results for any staff, pupils or service users, the location needs to be deep-cleaned using a professional deep cleaning company specialise in in cleaning to remove viral hazards.

Return to the site should not take place until testing has confirmed negative for the virus. At the time of writing there is debate as to whether negative testing is conclusive and there is the potential for the virus to recur. Clarity around this issue will warrant an amendment to this document in due course

4.1 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Bryn Melyn will ensure PPE has been distributed across all homes and schools and consists of:

- plastic aprons;
- eye protection;
- soap, and disposable hand towels/hand sanitiser (effective for viruses with a minimum of 60% alcohol);
- gloves;
- surgical face masks for exposure prone procedures.

PPE for Pandemic virus when used in a home environment, is classified as normal healthcare waste, and should be dealt with according to normal procedure.

4.2 Isolation

As the pandemic takes hold the Government may introduce 'lockdown' requirements in relation to schools and homes. In addition they may advise on staff, service users and pupils staying away from the school or home.

This information is applicable for Bryn Melyn Service Users in their homes or for Staff in their domestic homes.

A Bryn Melyn Home is treated as a domestic residential home for purposes of this policy

Current requirements <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>
. Isolation means staying at home and not going to public areas or outside the home.

4.2.1 Staff

For staff who live alone and have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when the symptoms started 7 days if they have either:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

For those who do not live alone they should stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person got symptoms.

- if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- for anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.
- if you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period
- if you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible

4.2.2 Service Users and / or Day Pupils

For service users or day pupils who have either:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

They should stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person got symptoms. Home refers to Bryn Melyn Home or a domestic home in the case of day pupils.

- if the service user or day pupil lives with others (e.g. shares bedroom, bathroom, lounge areas and or kitchen or lives in the same house) and they or someone they live with symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill
- it is likely that people living within a home will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the service users or day pupils could pass on to others
- for anyone in the home who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.

4.3. Ending self-isolation and household-isolation

If you have been symptomatic, then you may end your self-isolation after 7 days. The 7-day period starts from the day when you first became ill

If living with others, then all home members who remain well may end home-isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.

After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine. If any other home members become unwell during the 14-day home-isolation period, they should follow the same advice - that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.

Should a home member develop coronavirus symptoms late in the 14-day home-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) **the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days**. The 14-day home-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the home could pass on, and it is not necessary to re-start 14 days of isolation for the whole home. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.

At the end of the 14-day period, any home member who has not become unwell can leave home isolation.

If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and have not already sought medical advice, they should contact [NHS 111 online](#). If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

The cough may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared. A persistent cough alone does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days.

5.0 Workforce

In preparation for a pandemic Bryn Melyn will ensure Business Continuity plans are in place to ensure adequate staffing for the maintenance of services. Care should be taken to ensure staffing is maintained at safe levels.

5.1 Staff Absence

The level of staff absence from work during a pandemic will depend significantly on the nature of the pandemic virus when it emerges. Bryn Melyn Business Continuity Plans contain some contingencies for mitigating the effect of staff absence but it is a possibility some teams may be severely short staffed and would require assistance in order to perform their functions.

In such a situation the CEO or Operations Director may be needed to decide what functions may be suspended in order to maintain critical services.

During a pandemic, staff will be absent from work if:

- 5.1.1 they are ill with Coronavirus / Covid-19. *Numbers in this category will depend on the clinical attack rate. If the attack rate is the 50% figure given in the reasonable worst case, half of staff in total will be sick (and hence absent from work for a period) at some point during the course of the pandemic. This could give absence rates of 15-20% in the peak weeks of the pandemic assuming it occurs in one wave over a period of 12-15 weeks. But there may well be more than one wave, with absence from work being spread across those waves;*
- 5.1.2 absence is likely to be 7 working days for those without complications, and 14 for those with a need to care for children or family members who are ill; a need to care for (well) children due to the closure of schools; they have non-covid-19 medical problems; they have been advised to work from home. If they have been exposed to the virus, it is likely that a self-isolation will be required in their residence. This will be for a minimum of 14 days but could be extended into a period of illness should symptoms appear during this time or a test come back positive
- 5.1.3 The workforce response to a pandemic will be guided by pre-existing HR policies and guidance.
- 5.1.4 Some of the normal HR activities may have to be suspended during a pandemic.

5.2 Staff Redeployment

5.2.1 During a pandemic, staff may be requested to work in different services, teams or facilities within the organisation in order to keep homes running.

5.2.2 Staff will not be expected to work in identified roles without appropriate training and qualifications.

5.3. Annual Leave

5.3.1 During the early stages of a pandemic, individual services should review annual leave requests with a view to postponing leave during the peak of the pandemic (following month).

5.3.2 In the event of a pandemic, Bryn Melyn would encourage members of staff to consider cancelling their leave arrangements.

5.3.3 In these circumstances, Bryn Melyn would need to consider how it would accommodate a build-up of annual leave. This may involve:

- consideration of buying annual leave days out after the pandemic;
- allowing carry-forward of annual leave days owed;
- a combination of buying out and carrying forward annual leave days.

5.3.4 If annual leave is carried forward, Bryn Melyn will inform staff how it will allow them to take the leave later. However, staff will still need to go through the usual process for booking and approval of leave.

5.3.5 This process will be fully explained to members of staff before they agree to cancel their annual leave.

5.3.6 Bryn Melyn recognises the added stress and work, which would be placed on members of staff working during a pandemic event and will do everything possible to avoid asking staff to cancel their annual leave arrangements.

5.4 Staff with Caring Responsibilities

- 5.4.1 Bryn Melyn policies in relation in relation to absence for caring and childcare will continue to apply during a pandemic event. However, Bryn Melyn fully recognises the additional burden and stress placed on parents, partners and carers who are caring or concerned for others, during a pandemic.
- 5.4.2 When a pandemic has been declared all staff will report their absence because of personally caring for someone with the virus.
- 5.4.3 Bryn Melyn will ensure staff are given ready telephone access to contact their homes when at work through an identified phone in a designated private area or room. This may be the office if not used as an isolation area. Staff will also be able to use their work mobile telephones for this purpose.
- 5.4.4 Bryn Melyn offers the EAP scheme for staff wellbeing and mental health so ensure that awareness of this service is in place.
- 5.4.5 If staff require additional carer's leave, this needs to be dealt with in a sensitive, proactive manner in order to find the best alternative solution to meet the member of staff's needs. This may include:
- the use of paid or unpaid leave;
 - the use of annual leave;
 - finding alternative working hours;
 - finding additional sources of support at home.

5.5 Staff Accommodation & Transport

During a pandemic, Bryn Melyn will seek to provide accommodation for staff where required to enable them to continue working as part of our business continuity plan. Bryn Melyn will liaise with local agencies to co-ordinate provision of transport for staff where possible to allow them to remain in their own homes and be provided with transport to work if they are unable to use their normal method of getting to work due to different working hours.

6.0 Distribution of Antiviral Medications and Vaccinations

The distribution of antiviral medication and vaccinations is the responsibility of the NHS. Bryn Melyn will ensure residential service users receive appropriate medical attention and prescribed medication accordingly.

7.0 Managing Core Services during a Pandemic

This sets out the general principles under which Bryn Melyn will manage its services during a pandemic. More detailed guidance will be produced as and when relevant information is available should a pandemic be declared.

- Bryn Melyn will wherever possible seek to maintain all its services.
- Bank and retired staff may also be encouraged to support homes and schools.
- Bryn Melyn will maintain essential tasks associated with the management of Bryn Melyn services.
- Dependent upon the severity of the pandemic and level of staff absence, some functions may need to be brought together. Bryn Melyn will encourage as much flexibility within teams and across teams as possible.
- Bryn Melyn recognises absence levels may not allow it to maintain all its services. Agreements will need to be reached on which services are critical to the recovery and wellbeing of pupils and service users and are absolutely necessary to be maintained.

8.0 Kitchens and Meals

Thorough and frequent washing using soap and water is the key defence against viruses. Cleaning using detergent and water of touch points as outlined in Section 4, **Infection prevention and control**. Implementation of health questionnaires (Pre employment, Return to work Health Review and Visitors questionnaire for any contractors, maintenance, pest control etc visiting the kitchen.) will be

implemented. Any indications on the questionnaire that the person (whether staff or visitor) has been exposed to the virus, returned from countries where health restrictions are in place, needs to be reviewed and the staff member to leave the home/ school and contact NHS 111 or the visitor is denied entry to the kitchen.

Preparations need to be made to ensure that there is sufficient food for the staff and service users/ pupils in the event that restrictions are put into place by the Government or the home/ school is placed under quarantine. As a minimum this would amount to a minimum of 14 days food per person in the form of non-perishable dried, canned or frozen food. This provision should also take into account any allergies the staff member, service user or pupil may have.

Home/ School will draw up lists of non-perishable appropriate items which could be purchased should the need to bulk purchase items be required.

9.0 Safeguarding Service Users

Service users are managed through Safeguarding Children processes. This would be considered to be **Critical** services during a pandemic. Their vulnerability may increase by a pandemic.

Bryn Melyn will use the period before the pandemic is declared and will undertake a reassessment of their needs and presenting risks to determine the most appropriate means to manage them. This may necessarily entail other service users receiving a reduced service during the pandemic as a result of staff shortages.

The role of parents and guardians in helping to manage these service users during the pandemic is essential and Bryn Melyn will liaise closely with parents and guardians and will review their support plans during the period before the pandemic is declared.

During a pandemic, Bryn Melyn has a specific requirement, in conjunction with other organisations, to ensure at risk groups are specifically cared for. Examples of vulnerable people are:

- those already ill, either acutely or with chronic health problems;
- those dependent on drugs for disease management, symptom support or pain relief;
- those with significant physical or mental health problems;
- those with learning disabilities;
- those with physical disabilities;

The care of children requires special consideration. Children have special needs in a pandemic, being different from adults in terms of their size, physiology and psychological needs, all of which has an impact on their care.

Parents are likely to want to have close contact with their child, however, this will increase the risks to them and to any other children or family they may have. Anyone involved in a pandemic may suffer from stress and trauma. This is particularly important where children are involved. Parents and staff may be greatly distressed and counselling and support needs to be planned.

Access to psychological and counselling support will normally be coordinated by General Practitioners. Bryn Melyn appreciates that a pandemic may put additional strain on this service and support may not be as forthcoming as usual.

Children with visual, hearing, physical or learning disabilities are a particularly vulnerable group in a pandemic.

10.0 Equality and Diversity Issues

Bryn Melyn recognises and acknowledges the diverse nature of its workforce and of its service users. It will ensure all information and guidance sent to members of staff, parents and guardians will be in a language and format, which they can easily understand during a pandemic.

Bryn Melyn recognises the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act and the different effects these may have on its workforce, service users, parents and guardians during a pandemic and will ensure these are taken fully into account as far as is possible during such an event.

11.0 Schools

- The Government may advise that schools in affected areas should close to pupils on child welfare grounds to reduce the spread of infection amongst children.

- Should the Government advise that Schools are to close, Bryn Melyn will take this action immediately and follow instructional guidance issued by the Government.
- Preparation needs to be in place to ensure the children can be returned to parents or guardians should this be the case. This would also require consideration should there be insufficient staff at the school to be able to adequately supervise and address the welfare of pupils.
- Pre-pandemic we will carry out a check of contact details and reminding staff of procedures to be followed. Plans can be revised if the system escalates and there is a requirement to do this.
- Even if schools are not closing due to the pandemic, a decision may be made to close the school due to insufficient staffing

11.1 Pre-pandemic Planning

- Familiarise yourself with the Bryn Melyn Pandemic Crisis Policy
- Continue or review your regular action to ensure staff are aware of advice for service users and pupils and general guidance on infection control, including personal hygiene
- Ensure you are suitably equipped with materials needed to implement infection control measures (e.g. hot water and soap, tissues, sanitiser);
- Review policies for staff having absence from work including time off for dependents
- Review overall contingency plans in relation to staff numbers
- Ensure accurate contact information in place for all parents and guardians with respect to service users, pupils and staff
- Ensure positive encouragement to staff who are ill or think they are ill during a pandemic, not to come into work.
- Review personnel policies in relation to staff illness
- Consider a working from home option for staff where appropriate
- Cover arrangements if head and/or deputy are ill in the pandemic;
- Supply cover for absent staff; whether staff are willing and able to take on a different role during the pandemic
- Regrouping pupils if teachers are absent;
- Desirability/practicality of sharing staff between schools
- Review emergency arrangements for sending day pupils home
- Review emergency arrangements for key holders to ensure that there is a system in place if they are ill and unable to attend the school
- Maintaining health and safety arrangements e.g. cleaning, waste disposal and cleaning of bathrooms and toilets
- Arrangements for emergency medical help if a staff member, pupil or service user suddenly becomes very ill
- Consideration of specific repatriation plans for pupils or service users whose family has no guardianship arrangements in the UK based on potential difficulties in air travel as a result of the pandemic
- It may therefore be in the interest of those pupils for their school to remain open even if other schools were advised to close during a pandemic.

12.0 Homes

Review individual care plans and continue to care for this group of pupils, while taking infection control measures. The families of service users with special needs, particularly with very challenging behaviour or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), could be unable to cope if the pupil were to stay in the home. This could result in children entering the care system at a time when it would be strained by staff absences.

The homes will continue to function during a pandemic, as they will usually be the only residence for the children who depend on our services. The risk of infection spreading in these settings will not be much greater than in a large family, and is outweighed by the disruption of a transfer to other accommodation for service users who will often already have experienced much disruption in their lives.

Consideration will be given to limiting the spread of infection by moving service users so that well service users are not accommodated with sick ones. However, this will depend on appropriate infection control and medical advice and require the agreement of the local authority responsible for each service user's care. In most cases, however, well service users will need to stay in homes with sick service users.

During a pandemic we will maintain sufficient levels of staff cover in order to comply with section 25 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and to meet Standard 30 of the Children's Homes National Minimum

Standards. Where it is necessary to introduce temporary staff at short notice to cover for exceptional levels of staff absence, it will be important for them to be provided with sufficient guidance and supervision to be effective in their role. This will include DBS checks.

In the event of the Government declaring a lockdown, service users should only leave the house for very limited purposes:

- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle – with a staff member and maintain a two metre distance from others and wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water upon return from outside activity
- any medical need or to avoid or escape risk of injury or harm

Staff can leave the house for a very limited period in order to

- Carry out shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible
- Travelling for work purposes

Provision should be made for deliveries of food to the home through online shopping

Should any staff exhibit the signs of Covid-19, they should remain at home for at least 7 days or until the symptoms have disappeared. They should advise their manager that they are exhibiting symptoms so that the service users can be monitored for any such signs.

12.1 Pre-pandemic Planning

- Familiarise yourself with the Bryn Melyn Pandemic Crisis Policy
- Continue or review your regular action to ensure staff are aware of advice for service users and pupils and general guidance on infection control, including personal hygiene
- Ensure you are suitably equipped with materials needed to implement infection control measures (e.g. hot water and soap, tissues, sanitiser);
- Review policies for staff having absence from work including time off for dependents
- Review overall contingency plans in relation to staff numbers
- Ensure accurate contact information in place for all parents and guardians with respect to service users and staff
- Ensure positive encouragement to staff who are ill or think they are ill during a pandemic, not to come into work.
- Review personnel policies in relation to staff illness
- Consider a working from home option for staff where appropriate
- Cover arrangements if home manager is ill in the pandemic;
- Supply cover for absent staff; whether staff are willing and able to take on a different role during the pandemic
- Desirability/practicality of sharing staff between homes
- Arrangements for emergency medical help if a staff member or service user suddenly becomes very ill
- Consideration of specific repatriation plans for pupils or service users whose family has no guardianship arrangements in the UK based on potential difficulties in air travel as a result of the pandemic

13.0 Visitors to Homes and Schools During a Pandemic

Visiting will be reduced to those for whom a visit to the designated area is deemed essential. An essential visitor list will be held the home or school. This list will be reviewed upon application and not less than weekly by local managers with a final review by Regional Managers.

- It may be necessary to refuse access to those who appear to have influenza-like symptoms. The visitor health questionnaire for use in the kitchen will be adapted for this purpose
- Visitors exhibiting virus symptoms will not be given access to school or home until they are fourteen days post symptom/antiviral commencement.
- Notices will be prominently displayed by all entrances and exits advising of the

pandemic status of the home or school .

- All approved visitors will report to a designated reception area to make their presence known and await a member of staff to meet them.
- The member of staff will log the visitor's entry (time, date, name, business) brief them on infection control procedures in place.
- Bryn Melyn recognises the importance of visitors to promoting and maintaining the wellbeing of service users. However, during a pandemic to prevent the spread of the pandemic, telephone, letter and email contact will be encouraged instead of personal visits to ensure the wellbeing of all visitors and service users. In exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the responsible Head of Division, it may be necessary to close the premises to all visitors.

14.0 Human Rights

Bryn Melyn acknowledges that restricting visiting service users may engage article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights (as incorporated into The Human Rights Act 1998) as implementing actions, which restrict visitors, is included within the ambit of this article. However, in the event of a pandemic it is necessary to balance this right with the health and safety of service users and broader public health considerations.

The qualification to this right is to be found in article 8(2):

*"There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right **except** such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, **public safety** or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, **for the protection of health** or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others" (emphasis added).*

Having fully considered the matter, Bryn Melyn regards its actions in restricting visitors under this policy to fall within the ambit of article 8(2), and as such its actions are justifiable and proportionate in all the circumstances.

This policy is subject to constant review and amendment as necessary

Signed:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Date: 04 May 2020
Version 5