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**Office of the Chief Nursing Officer**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

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**Deputy Director Population Healthcare Division**

Chief Executives Health Boards/Trusts  
Medical Directors  
Nurse Directors  
Directors of Public Health

We are writing to reiterate the essential requirement for routine SARS-CoV-2 testing in unplanned emergency and urgent admissions to Welsh hospitals. We were concerned to discover following an investigation into a recent outbreak, that not all emergency admissions to one of our hospitals had been tested. There is a very real danger that if this requirement is not complied with then Welsh hospitals will rapidly fill with COVID-19 cases.

As we enter autumn and winter, in addition to treating patients who are ill because of COVID-19 infection and maintaining essential services, we must also endeavour to address the substantial backlog in elective procedures and diagnostics. In order to achieve this it will be essential to maintain the integrity of Covid-19 'low risk' or 'light' pathways within our hospitals. This can only be assured by ascertaining the COVID-19 infection status of all admissions and particularly those that are unplanned.

We have become increasingly aware of the significant amount of COVID-19 transmission in patients who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. It is essential then that as community transmission rises, we protect our hospitals by routinely testing all admissions.

The NICE publication 'COVID-19 rapid guideline: arranging planned care in hospitals and diagnostic services' advises a SARS-CoV-2 test for all routine admissions requiring anaesthesia with decision to admit resting upon having the results available.

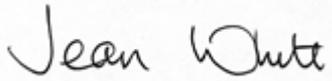
Our strategy for testing for COVID-19 in Wales (15 July) and 'A Principles Framework to assist the NHS in Wales to return urgent and planned services in hospital settings during COVID-19' (3rd June) contain the stipulation: *'Emergency Admissions: test all patients on admission. For patients who test negative, further testing will be undertaken if COVID-19 symptoms are present or develop.'*



**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL**  
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Our expectation is that all Welsh hospitals will demonstrate that they are complying with this guidance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light grey background behind it.

**PROF JEAN WHITE CBE MSTJ**  
Chief Nursing Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**PROFESSOR CHRIS JONES**  
Deputy Chief Medical Officer