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Back to community life

Practical guide

www.phw.nhs.wales



Have you thought about getting out and about?

This practical guide is for:

- Individuals who want to get out and about in their community
- People who are supporting individuals who want to get out and about in their community
- Usage in your home for preparation to be able to go out and about

You may have been someone who has been shielding or you may be somebody who has been feeling vulnerable. The information in this booklet aims to help you, and those who know you, consider the small but positive preparations that can be put in place to help with re-engaging within your local community.

For some it may seem obvious, but considering the small steps can help you to feel more confident and prepared for the journey while also identifying areas that may be a challenge and require further advice and/or assistance if needed.

This practical guide will ask questions like:

- Before lockdown began, did you go out often?
- Where did you go and how did you get there?
- How many steps were you able to take?

These questions are focused on what you are doing now compared to what you did before lockdown and what you would like to do in future.

Answering these questions will help you to think about any changes that may have occurred during the past few months with areas such as your physical and mental health and wellbeing. Changes could include your feelings or stamina.



By helping you to compare, you will be able to recognise if anything has improved, stayed the same or become worse.

This practical guide will offer tips to help you prepare yourself to go out, and how to plan in advance.

It is expected that everyone may experience worry and nervousness after being at home for such a long period of time. Starting small and being aware of the challenges will equip you with the tools required to manage them.

01.

Preparing to leave the house



1 Preparation

Ideally preparation would be a few days or weeks in advance. If it has been a while since you left the house you will understandably need to plan in order to adjust to a new routine.

Setting goals and pacing yourself will be important. As needs are unique to each individual, consider the points in this leaflet as you plan your day.

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing>



- This information can also be found towards the end of this booklet.

2 Footwear

Have you tried wearing your outdoor shoes around the house?

Try wearing your shoes around the house, slippers tend to be much lighter to wear and have a different grip on the sole compared to your shoes you would wear when going out. You will know if they will be comfortable, if they may cause you to trip over or if the sole will help prevent slipping and falling.

3 Dressing for the weather

What clothing would you be wearing when going out? What would you wear if the weather is nice? Layering and trying items on at home will give you an idea of the extra weight you will be carrying and you will be able to see if you feel comfortable in these items or if you need to change them.

- Try wearing your rain or winter coat when walking around your house or back garden
- Try wearing a light rain coat and a cardigan if the coat feels too heavy
- Practice wearing different style shoes (winter boots for the rain, summer shoes for warmer weather)

4 Protective face coverings

It may be beneficial to practice wearing your face mask while walking around your house. This will allow you to experience how it feels and how it may impact on your ability to see (with or without glasses), speak and walk certain distances.

5 Surfaces

In most homes, surfaces are even and level. However, when outdoors, they are very different and can cause your feet to catch on the flooring or need you to shift your balance from one side to the other. This can increase risks such as trips and falls.

- Practice walking around your house
- If it is safe for you, try walking outside your home for short periods each day to help prepare and build up confidence.
- Make use of any assistive aids you used before lockdown or any new ones that you may have been given for this purpose.

6 Preparing for queuing - standing on one spot!

Many shops may require people to queue outside as they are limiting the number of people in the shop at one time. This can put a burden on people waiting, especially in the winter months. When in the home environment we rarely stand in one spot for any length of time. We usually only stand still to carry out tasks, such as the dishes or washing at the sink. During these tasks the counter and sink often support our body.

Consider how comfortable you are standing without the support of the wall or counter, this will be important for walking short open spaces or standing/queuing outside shops and premises.

How many steps?

This table is here to help you work out how many steps you feel comfortable doing. [You can use your total to measure the steps needed to move around in town or plan when you need to rest.]

Write down the number of steps from one room to another and at the end of the day write down how many steps you have completed.



How Many Steps	From	To	Total Steps	Did you rest or need furniture to support you	Were you breathless or in discomfort
<u>Example:</u> 15 steps	Living room chair	Kitchen sink	There and back: 30 steps		



Distance and duration

This **practical guide** contains a 2 metre fold out ruler to help you judge how many steps 2 metres is to ensure keeping a safe distance.

- How many steps does it take to get from your chair to the kitchen sink? Or from your chair to the toilet?
- Try using our steps chart to help you work out how many steps you can do each time or in one day.

Count your steps when walking around your house as this will give you an idea of how far you are able to walk. Practicing walking allows you to build up stamina enabling you to walk further, it will also help you predict how far you will be able to walk when you do go out.

- When walking around your house do you need help to steady yourself?
- Do you hold on to handrails or furniture?
- Do you get breathless after walking?
- How far can you walk before you are breathless?

Tips to get used to different surfaces:

- Walk around your home
- Walk up and down your street
- Stepping up and down kerbs
- Standing on one spot

This will help to find what shoes feel more supportive. Practicing near your home will help grow your confidence in your own time and without worry of others rushing you or having to negotiate around them.



This is an example of how you can measure what you are doing each day and use this to see if you have needed to rest frequently or become breathless.

Most importantly have the steps you are currently completing changed or become a lot less than before lockdown. Do you think these will prevent you safely going to where you want to?

Will you need to discuss changes in your fitness with your GP surgery or community health and wellbeing coordinator?

Consideration for people using wheelchairs

If you use a wheelchair, you may find it helpful to consider the number of arm movements required to propel your wheelchair forward from A to B instead of steps. This will help you estimate how many arm propels you feel comfortable doing and help you manage the distances required to propel your wheelchair in the community.

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Local distances - your community map

Going shopping 02.

If you have not been shopping for a while, think about what shops would be a good place to start. The larger stores have more steps whilst inside however have less steps to get to them.

Planning is key!

Use your steps chart to think about how you can make shopping easier and plan where and what will you be doing within your own limits.

Before you go, try practicing carrying a bag (if you would take one shopping with you) and shopping bags/trolley around the house (if there is space), this will allow you to see how comfortable it will be for you to carry them:

- Think about how many bags you would normally be carrying
- Handbag – wearing a handbag can increase weight on the one side
- Shopping bag
- How big of a shop do you plan on doing

Practice by putting one/two tins in a shopping bag and carrying them from the kitchen to the front door in keeping with your steps chart. You can build this up adding more tins when practicing to mirror the amount you buy or what would be your limit;

- Could you use a rucksack or shopping trolley?
- What would work best for you?

Practice wearing your coat and shoes while carrying your shopping bags or pulling your shopping trolley.



Where will you be going?

Can you change a small part of the routine – shop where you can have your items delivered home, or have larger tins and frozen items collected for you or a taxi / lift to get home.

What best suits you on that day?

Larger stores –

- Greater distance to walk inside, up and down aisle
- Flooring is mostly level
- There are persons available in store should you need support
- Using a shopping trolley means you do not have to carry any bags
- Parking and transport is close to the entrance
- Variation in busy times and may have queues to enter the building and at tills

Smaller stores –

- Shorter distance to walk indoors
- Familiar with layout
- Staff available to help
- May have reduced number of people in the store
- Social contact with shop keepers
- Variety of shops
- Distance to transport or parking can be varied
- Different floor surfaces between shops

03. Managing money when out and about

Paying by card may be easier and safer than handling cash. To reduce handling cash, many stores now take contactless card payments up to £45.

Contactless payments involve tapping your card on the payment machine. If you have not used contactless payment before, then you might want to consider telephoning your bank to check you have the right card and advice on how to do this.

If you are thinking of using your card to pay, please remember your pin just in case the shop does not take contactless payment. Most shops still accept cash payments if this is how you prefer to pay for your shopping.

If your bank card has this logo on it, it is contactless and you can just tap it on the payment machine



Will shops and community places look different? What should I expect?

Shops and community places have all taken steps to ensure safety. These may include e.g. have one way direction signs, signs which show the social distancing measures, cleaning stations for trolleys, hand sanitizer stations. There may be shields or guards in front of staff covering tills.

There are always instructions at the entrance to shops and public places and staff that can help explain what you need to do. Please ask them if you are unsure.

To take a look of what some of the adaptations may look like please see the link to the Dewis website where there is a selection of video clips and other resources explaining this.

Checklist when going out:

Having a checklist before going out can help make sure you remember to take everything you need:

- Hand cleansing items
- Taking two protective face mask with you (one as back up)
- Taking a mobile phone with you and inform others of your trip out so that you have back up or a taxi to hand.
- Shopping bags that are the size you need for what you can carry
- Glasses
- Hearing aid
- Prepare yourself with a script to ask for help or ask for space or help if you feel you need to -

"I'm just adjusting from shielding at home, can you help me with any new rules you have in your store"

The guidance can change quickly so being up to date on the day you are leaving will be helpful, and writing this down to remind you.

Distance Aware Badge and Lanyards

The shops in your local community that have signed up to becoming Covid recovery friendly are aware of the Bevan Commission Distance Aware campaign. This campaign is about raising awareness of the importance of maintaining the recommended distances when out and about.

As part of this campaign shops will display distance awareness reminders and people who need to take these measures wear a distance aware badge.

Some people have welcomed wearing the badge or lanyards out and about however, other people have raised that they would not feel comfortable. Wearing a distance aware badge or lanyard is personal choice.

If you are interested in obtaining a badge or lanyard finding out more please contact:

<https://www.bevancommission.org/post/badge-helps-public-prepare-for-the-easing-of-shielding-measures> 

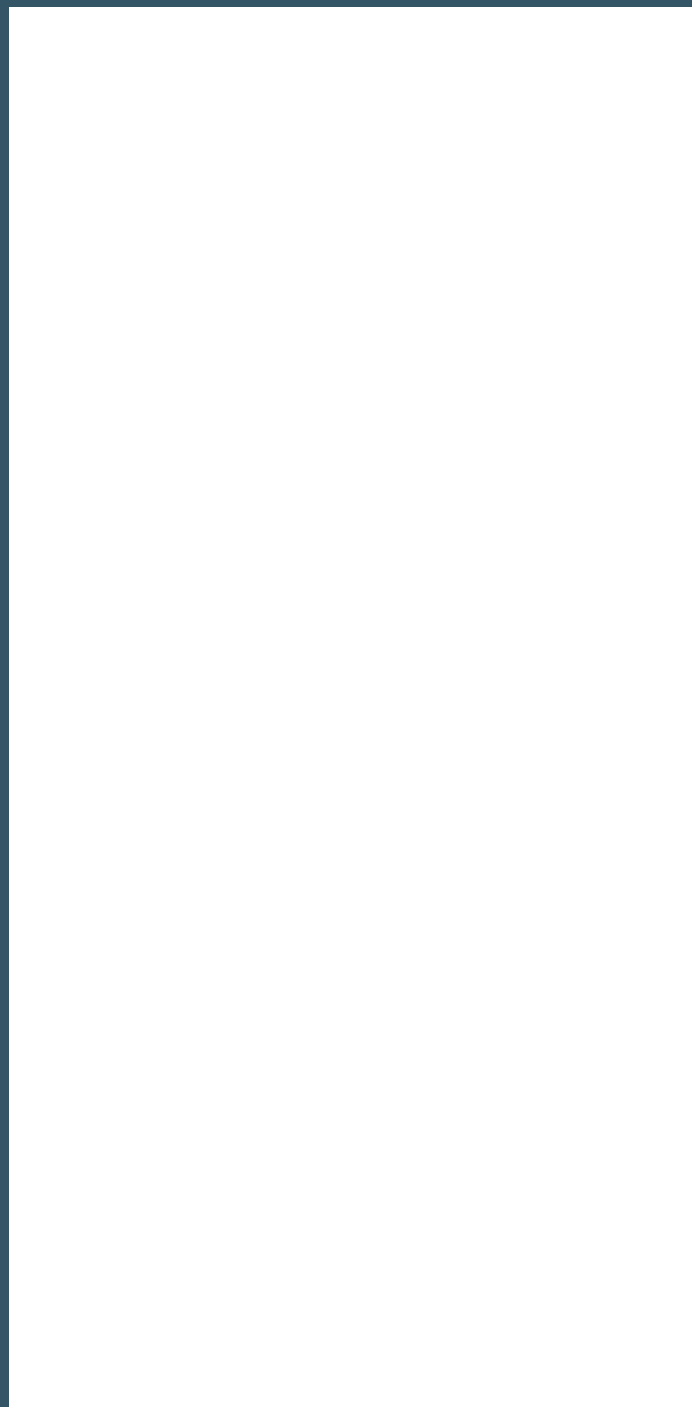
<https://www.weprintlanyards.com/lanyards-pattern.aspx> 

Considering support from family/friends or volunteers

In making the first steps some people may find it useful to consider, where possible, going out with family/friends or volunteers in the first instance.

If friends and family are unable to support you with this, please find the contact to your local authority community volunteer services.

Local Services contact details:



Welsh Government and Public Health Wales

Advice on keeping safe is updated all the time. Welsh Government and Public Health Wales provide current up to date advice on what we should be doing to keep safe along with what others in the community should be doing to make us safe.

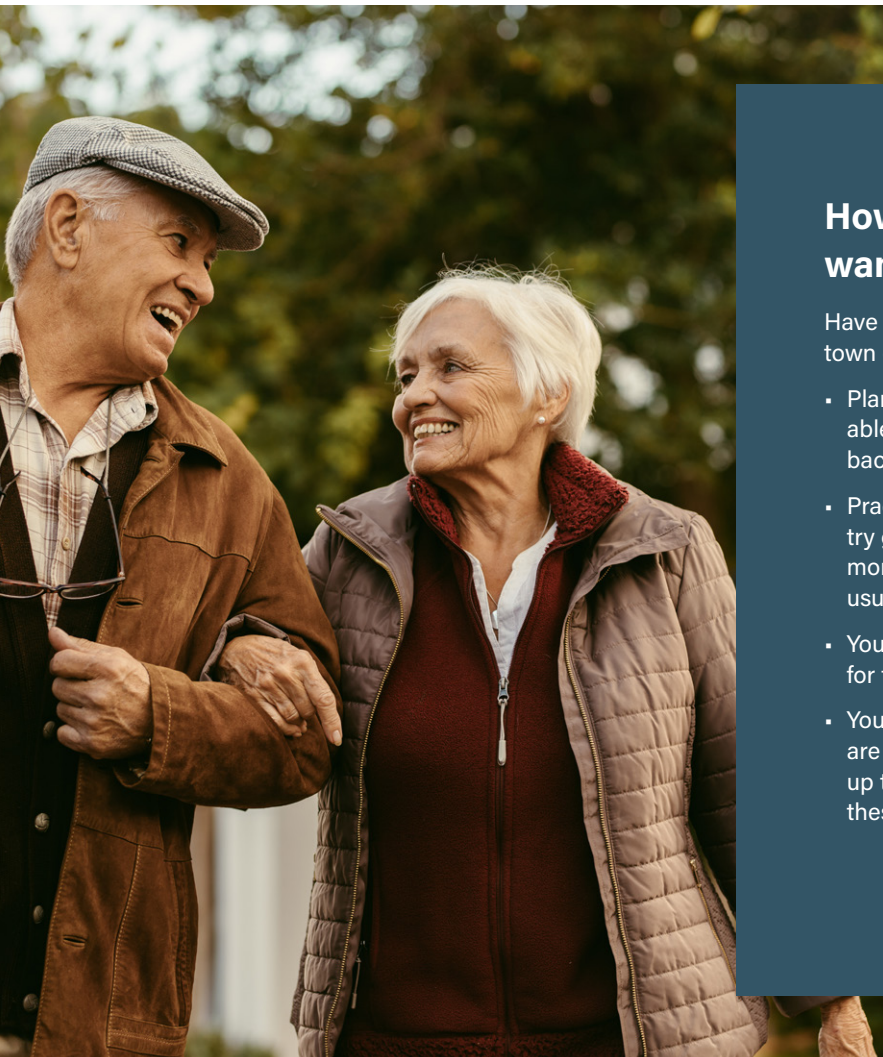
Advice changes all the time in view of what we and others need to do to keep safe. If you are not sure or have any queries about wearing masks, who should be wearing face masks and other safety requirements please see the following contacts for advice.

Welsh Government Website with up to date information:

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus> 

Public Health Wales: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/> 

Contact telephone number: 0300 0030 032



How will you get where you need or want to be?

Have you considered how you will get to the shops, into town or how you get back?

- Planning your route beforehand is beneficial as you are able to see how long it will take you to get there and back.
- Practicing your journey without shopping can be helpful, try going with a friend or family member on a Sunday morning when it is quiet or on days that are quieter than usual.
- You might want to consider a taxi or use public transport for the return journey if you have a long way to go.
- You also might want to consider what time of day you are going to avoid busy periods for example school pick up times. Taxis and public transport may be busy during these periods.

Preparing physically and emotionally

04.

If you experience difficulties with remembering, planning, or are anxious, taking the time to practice and adjust in a controlled space and with the support of family will reduce negative experiences.

We are all aware that if we experience something unplanned that is unsettling or causes us to be afraid we can avoid this in the future. It is important where possible to avoid this or to have skills to manage this in order to prevent withdrawal from activities that are important to us and that we need to do and enjoy.



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There are many ways to look after your mental wellbeing. What will work best for you? This is an uncertain time for us all, but have you stopped to ask yourself how you are doing?

Using CALM may help you to take care of your feelings, your body, your thoughts and what you are doing.

- Calming Activities - relaxation, seeking reassurance and mindfulness practices
- Attending to basic needs - thinking carefully about your sleep, exercise, nutrition
- Learning to re-think - avoiding rumours, limiting media coverage, thinking in the here and now
- Making yourself feel good - doing things that bring you joy and take your mind off your worries



There are many self-help resources that have been created specifically in response to the COVID-19 crisis. It is recognized that throughout the UK, COVID-19 is challenging for everyone.

As individuals our experiences and circumstances are unique to us and people will respond to their experiences in different ways. However common, normal reactions are likely to include positive emotions such as a feeling of togetherness and hope, along with negative emotions such as anxiety and lowered mood

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>

Telephone: **0300 123 3393**

Text: **86463**

Email: **info@mind.org.uk**



Royal College of Occupational Therapists - Staying Well when Social Distancing

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing>

Guidance for people managing health conditions during social distancing

Everyone's lives and daily routines have been affected by social distancing and the COVID-19 pandemic. More than ever we need to be looking after ourselves and for many, this includes managing health conditions.

Here are some tips to help you to manage your health conditions during social distancing or self-isolation. There may also be other things you can do to help manage specific conditions, so do ask for advice from your occupational therapist and other healthcare professionals.

1) Use digital resources.

The NHS App Library has lots of online tools for managing a range of physical and mental health conditions, most of which are free to use. Many health charities have self-management information on their websites suitable for specific health conditions.

Make sure that you only take advice from trustworthy sources. If your health needs change, or you become unwell, please contact your GP or get NHS advice:

- Wales: NHS Direct Wales online or call 111 or 0845 46 47 (depending on geographic locations)

2) Set goals.

Goals give us a sense of purpose and mark our progress. They are something to aim for, and can help motivate us.

As you work towards your goal, listen to your body and how you are feeling. Be prepared to be flexible; you may need to adapt your goals and that's okay. If you find that you're putting too much pressure on yourself, try using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) strategies. You can find out more about CBT in the NHS App Library or by speaking to a healthcare professional for local services.

Consider keeping a diary of what you have been able to do and your achievements – this can be a great reminder of your progress, especially on not so good days.

3) Pace your routine.

If you experience fatigue, breathlessness or chronic pain, it can help to spread your activities throughout the day or week, rather than trying to complete everything in one go.



CHARTERED
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OF
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Helping older people stay active at home.

A simple set of exercises designed especially for older people to help everyone stay active at home .

<https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-and-healthy/staying-healthy-you-age/staying-strong-you-age/strength>



Mental Health Helpline For Wales

Community Advice & Listening Line

Offering a confidential listening and support service

Freephone **0800 132 737**

Or text **help** to **81066**

We are all feeling lots of strong emotions such as grief, anxiety, fear, anger, love, pride and You may be feeling worried about family and friends, stressed over finances, or anxious about catching coronavirus. Sadness. Some of these feelings might be hard to explain or name. They may come and go in waves. It is ok that we have these feelings, as things are different and uncertain - so try not to judge yourself on how you are feeling.

Wales Dementia Helpline

<http://www.callhelpline.org.uk/>

Ring **0808 808 2235** open 24/7

Wales Dementia Helpline providing support, information and free literature to anyone in Wales living with Dementia as well as their family, friends and carers

Accessing further support to get back to community life

Evaluating your own Individual circumstances, you may feel you need further advice and support. This may be needed to manage any physical and mental difficulties that stop you from getting back to community life.

Please contact your single access health and social care hub who will be able to direct you to the most appropriate route to help:

Useful Numbers:



Acknowledgements

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The Back to Community Life – Mountain Ash Community Partnership Group consists of the following organisations

- Improvement Cymru - Public Health Wales
- Age Connects Morgannwg
- RCT Local Resident
- Alzheimer's Society
- South Wales Police Service
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Practitioners in primary and secondary care
- Older People's Wales Commissioner office
- Welsh Ambulance Service
- South Wales Fire Service and Rescue Service;

- Care and Repair Cymru;
- Interlink RCT
- Social Care Wales

This practical guide has been designed to be shaped by the community for the local community.

**Stronger together -
The Heart of Communities in Wales**



Step 1


Cut out on the dashed lines.

Step 2

Put the sections in order.

Step 3

Tape or paste the sections together at the tabs.



24	49	74	100
23	48	73	99
22	47	72	98
21	46	71	97
20	45	70	96
19	44	69	95
18	43	68	94
17	42	67	93
16	41	66	92
15	40	65	91
14	39	64	90
13	38	63	89
12	37	62	88
11	36	61	87
10	35	60	86
9	34	59	85
8	33	58	84
7	32	57	83
6	31	56	82
5	30	55	81
4	29	54	80
3	28	53	79
2	27	52	78
1	26	51	77
			76

Labels on the left side of the grid: 20, 10, 50, 40, 60, 80, 100.

Step 1


Cut out on the dashed lines.

Step 2

Put the sections in order.

Step 3

Tape or paste the sections together at the tabs.



← 100

← 76
← 74 Tape or paste

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← 49 Tape or paste

← 26
← 24 Tape or paste

← 1

