

Advice for Health Professionals regarding the Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood (PRUDiC) in view of the Covid-19 outbreak 6.4.20

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1. Advice for Health Professionals regarding the Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood (PRUDiC) in view of the Covid-19 outbreak - 06.04.2020

This advice is in response to queries from NHS staff regarding PRUDiC during the Covid-19 outbreak and reflects the situation at present although this is changing daily and NHS staff are urged to keep up to date with current advice from PHW and the UK Government.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
<https://covid19-phwstatement.nhs.wales/>
<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

2. PRUDiC

PRUDiC is the process of multiagency communication, collaborative action and information sharing following the unexpected death of a child. Its aim is to ensure that the response is safe, consistent and sensitive to those concerned, and that there is uniformity across Wales in the multi-agency response to unexpected child deaths. The purpose of the PRUDiC is

- to coordinate support for the parents, siblings and the peer group of the child who has died
- to share and collate relevant multiagency information, including with the coroner, pathologist and to inform any police investigation
- and to consider the potential risk to other children and the need for child protection procedures.

The process is well established in the NHS across Wales and is supported and monitored through the Regional Safeguarding Boards. Professionals should adhere to this good practice despite the current Covid-19 outbreak. If any variance is necessary this should be recorded, along with the rationale for digressing from the PRUDiC process.

PRUDiC:
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/PRUDiC%202018%20Final.pdf>

3. Covid-19 Outbreak

As of Monday 6 April there have been 3499 people in Wales who have tested positive for Covid-19 during the current outbreak, although the true number of cases are likely to be higher.

Any child who dies during this outbreak, from whatever cause, must be considered to be a potential infection risk and all professionals should take appropriate infection control measures to protect themselves by wearing personal protection equipment (PPE). The current guidance on PPE can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

In particular please see Table 1 PPE recommendations for health and social care workers by context for both NHS and independent sectors in secondary care inpatient clinical settings

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877728/T1 Recommended PPE for healthcare workers by secondary care clinical context poster.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877728/T1_Recommended_PPE_for_healthcare_workers_by_secondary_care_clinical_context_poster.pdf)

and Table 3 Recommended PPE for ambulance, paramedics, first responders and pharmacists

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877602/T3 Recommended PPE for ambulance staff paramedics first responders and pharmacists poster.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877602/T3_Recommended_PPE_for_ambulance_staff_paramedics_first_responders_and_pharmacists_poster.pdf)

4. Transmission of infection

The transmission of COVID-19 is thought to occur mainly through respiratory droplets generated by coughing and sneezing, and through contact with contaminated surfaces. During aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) there is an increased risk of aerosol spread of infection and airborne precautions must be implemented when performing AGPs such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In the context of PRUDiC professionals should use their judgement and, whilst making every attempt to preserve life, should avoid performing CPR when it would be futile.

Mementoes of the child, such as handprints and locks of hair, should be collected and put into memory boxes in line with normal practice. They will not pose an additional significant infection risk to a parent who has been living with and caring for the deceased child.

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5. Safeguarding considerations

During the current Covid-19 outbreak families are following government advice to stay at home, maintaining social distance and in some cases socially isolating or even shielding. Schools are closed and children are having little if any contact with friends, neighbours, teachers and extended family members. We know isolation can put some children at greater risk of abuse and makes it more difficult for children to seek help. Professionals need to be aware of this possibility when examining the deceased child, and when considering the safeguarding of other children especially in families where bereavement will be an additional stressor.

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