

## ***Provider FAQ's – Changes announced 16/02/21***

### **Testing within 90 days of a PCR**

#### ***Why has advice changed for the testing of staff using LFD's within 90days of a positive PCR?***

The previous policy to continue LFD testing following a positive PCR result was because although very unlikely, it is possible to be re-infected within 90 days. However, based on the latest testing data and clinical advice, the policy has now changed.

The clinical view is that during this 90 day window from a positive test, given the low rate of reinfection during this window it is significantly more likely that a positive LFD test would be a false result, rather than someone being re-infected, causing people to isolate unnecessarily. Therefore, we are now stopping the regular testing using LFD during this 90-day period. The individual should return to the regular LFD and PCR regime once 90 days has passed.

#### ***What if a member of staff has just returned to work after testing positive for Covid-19?***

Staff and residents are exempt from testing for 90 days following a positive test.

#### ***Does a staff member have to have a negative test before they return to work?***

No, as long as the relevant isolation period has been completed and symptoms (if any) have subsided, staff can return to work without having to undergo testing.

### ***Outbreak testing***

#### ***What should I do if I suspect an outbreak?***

An 'outbreak' is officially two or more positive / clinically suspected cases within 14 days, whether that result is returned through a PCR or LFD test.

Care homes are legally required to contact their Health Protection Team for advice in the event of a suspected or confirmed outbreak. Outbreak testing consists of:

- PCR tests are required for all residents and staff on day 1 of the outbreak and also between days 4 and 7.
- LFD tests for residents twice, on the same days that they conduct their outbreak PCR tests.
- Daily staff LFD testing until 5 days have passed with no positive results.

#### ***What should I do if there is one positive test result in my home?***

If a care home only has one single positive case, please advise the care home to contact their local Health Protection Team and make them aware. They will also need to start the rapid response testing using LFDs (daily testing of staff for seven days). If no further positives are identified in these seven days, then the rapid response testing should stop. If further positives are identified, your care home should again contact their Health Protection Team as this is likely to be an outbreak.

#### ***A courier is already booked for the day of outbreak testing, do I need to book an extra one?***

As homes will already be engaged in the rolling programme of staff/resident testing – they may already have a courier booked for the day that outbreak testing takes place. In this circumstance they should not book an additional courier.

*Should this not be the case, please contact 119 to book a same day courier for the care home.*

*Orders for subsequent days of testing should be booked in the normal way, at least one day in advance of testing using the courier booking portal: <https://test-kit-collection.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>*

#### ***Can I cancel a courier booking if I no longer need it?***

*Yes 119 can cancel any courier booking you no longer require.*

#### ***What if I've not got enough kits to cover testing required in an outbreak?***

If the home is in a current outbreak, ensure they have contacted their local HPT and then call 119 to request an urgent delivery of kits.

If the home is not currently in outbreak, advise them to wait until they can place an order through the portal at the normal 21-day interval.

#### ***How do homes return outbreak LFD tests?***

Used LFD kits do not have to be sent to labs and should instead be disposed of in a healthcare waste bin.

#### ***Can you prioritise the test from my home to get my results quicker?***

Unfortunately, there is currently no way of prioritising results from outbreak testing at this time.

#### ***What should I do if I cannot get hold of my HPT?***

Care homes should contact their HPT immediately for advice, but if they are not able to get through, they should commence testing immediately, as per outbreak testing guidance. They should continue to attempt contact with the HPT until successful.

#### ***What about other settings in outbreaks such as hospices?***

Outbreak testing is not available for Hospices. This guidance and process is only for care homes in England. It does not apply to any other Adult social care settings.

If an outbreak does occur in a hospice, the hospice manager should contact their local health protection team and follow their advice.

#### ***What about staff who are not at work?***

Staff with symptoms should not be in work, they should not come into work for testing and should be tested by another channel e.g. regional testing site or home testing. Daily LFD testing is not required in response to an outbreak if a staff member is not due to attend work that day.