

Monday 28 August 2023

**COVID-19 testing – who, what, when?** Following a clinical review, all Scottish Government COVID-19 routine testing guidance in health, social care, and prison settings will be **paused**. An exception to this pause is for individuals in hospital, prior to being discharged to a care home or a hospice; this routine testing will remain. The table below explains the new guidance:

| Testing IS recommended   | Type of test   |
|--|--|
| <b>Care home residents</b> with new respiratory symptoms who also have a fever or are noticeably unwell              | PCR for respiratory panel<br>(Do NOT use LFD)  |
| <b>Care home residents</b> without respiratory symptoms but who are otherwise noticeably unwell, or who have a fever | PCR for respiratory panel if the assessing clinician decides this is warranted<br>(Do NOT use LFD) |
| <b>Hospital in-patients</b> being discharged to care homes or hospices   | LFD  |
| <b>Patients</b> requiring a test for clinical diagnostic reasons or to inform clinical treatment decisions           | PCR for respiratory panel<br>(Do NOT use LFD)  |

| Testing NOT recommended  | Type of test  |
|--|---|
| Healthcare, social care, and care home <b>staff</b> with possible COVID-19 symptoms  | No test – follow stay at home advice at <a href="https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19">https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19</a> |
| <b>Care home residents</b> with mild new respiratory symptoms (e.g., sore throat, tickly cough, runny nose) WITHOUT fever or being noticeably unwell | No test   |

Testing protocol for COVID-19 will revert to testing as appropriate to support clinical diagnosis and for outbreak management as per the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM), or on advice from either the local Infection Prevention & Control or Health Protection teams. Testing for those who are eligible for COVID-19 treatments will also continue to be available.

Information on the new policy has already been sent to colleagues in the care home sector and in Primary Care. **The deadline for moving to the new guidance is Wednesday 30 August.** From that date – and as highlighted in the table above – testing is not recommended for health & social care staff with possible COVID-19 symptoms. You should stay at home until your symptoms are resolved.

Clinical staff must remember the self-isolation period for hospital in-patients and care home service users is different

- Hospital Inpatients require a minimum of 10 days isolation.

- Residents self-isolating inside the care home require a minimum of 5 days.
- Residents do not need to continue with self-isolation on admission to the care home if they have completed a minimum of 5 days self-isolation whilst in hospital and they are fever free for 48 hours without the use of medication.
- Day 1 of isolation is counted as the day after the date of their positive test/symptom onset. One negative LFD result should be available preferably within 48hrs prior to discharge from hospital.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **How can I prevent passing COVID-19 onto my patients/service users and family without access to symptomatic testing?**

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection such as coronavirus and have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. Try to do this until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you feel better as per the advice on NHS Inform.

### **Why has routine COVID-19 testing ended?**

Following clinical advice, it is recommended that we pause routine testing. This is due to the success of the vaccination programme, reduced severity of illness and hospitalisations, and availability of treatments for COVID-19. This follows advice from Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI) Scotland, Public Health Scotland, and Scottish Government Professional Clinical Advisors in Infection Prevention and Control.

### **What do I do if I have tested positive for COVID-19 and my isolation period runs over the date when routine testing is paused?**

If you have a positive coronavirus test and your isolation period runs over the date when routine testing is paused, you should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days after the day you took your test, or from the day your symptoms started (whichever was earlier). You should count the day you took the test as day 0, or the day after your positive result, as day 1. You do not need to have a negative test result to end self-isolation or return to work after the 5-day period. This follows the advice on NHS Inform.

### **What if I am still eligible to receive and take free tests?**

Most people in Scotland no longer need to test for coronavirus. You can still access testing if you have a health condition which means you're eligible for coronavirus treatments. If this applies to you, please follow the advice on NHS Inform.

**What do I do if I have symptoms of a respiratory infection?** If you have symptoms of respiratory infection, you should follow the advice outlined above as per the guidance on NHS Inform.

**I still have unused tests at home, should I use these when I have symptoms?** Most people in Scotland no longer need to test for coronavirus. If you have symptoms, we recommend that you follow the NHS Inform guidance.

**I am still worried about my risk from COVID-19. What support is available from my employer (NHS staff only) to keep me safe at work?** The pausing of routine testing follows the latest clinical guidance, and standard infection prevention and control measures remain in place. Staff are expected to manage their risk in relation to COVID-19 in much the same way as any other respiratory infection. If you are still concerned about your risks to COVID-19 following the pause of testing, you should speak to

your manager about a personal risk assessment. Your manager may consider a referral to Occupational Health as part of this.

**Staff car parking – Foresterhill Health Campus** This is the final week to take part in the survey on future options on managing staff car parking at Foresterhill – the survey closes next Monday. You should only complete it once, and only if you are a member of NHS Grampian staff with Foresterhill Health Campus as your main or only base. Please read this briefing sheet first, available here: [NHS Grampian News - Staff car parking – Foresterhill Health Campus... \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/news/2020/07/20200720-staff-car-parking-foresterhill-health-campus/)

[The survey is available via this link](#) or you can scan the QR code below if you are reading a printed version of the brief.



**Chaplaincy Department – appointments for ‘Space to talk’** Following an initial three-month trial offering support for staff, we are pleased to say we will continue to offer 50-minute appointments each Friday morning at 9, 10 and 11 am. These appointments will be held in the Quiet Room, ARI Chapel, Pink Zone, Level 2 and can be booked by calling Ext 53316 or emailing [gram.chaplaincy@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.chaplaincy@nhs.scot).

These appointments are in addition to the Community Chaplaincy Listening (CCL) appointments which are available as follows:

- Health Village, Frederick Street – Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 9, 10 and 11am
- Get Active @Northfield – Thursday at 1, 2 and 3pm.

Appointments for the Health Village and Get Active can be booked by calling the Health Village on 01224 655555.

For further information on any of the above, you can contact a member of the chaplaincy team by calling Ext 53316 or emailing as above. Remember, chaplaincy support is something you can tap into at any time, and the team are there for those of all faiths, and none.

**Pause for thought** How does the level of stability around you impact you? In what ways do your foundations need nurtured?

**Tune of the day** [Manic Monday](#). It was for me – how about you? (EP)

If you want to request a tune, follow up on items included in this brief, or suggest an item for sharing, drop us an email via [gram.communications@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.communications@nhs.scot)