

Dear Colleagues,

Healthcare Workers to increase Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing frequency from twice weekly to daily.

Firstly, we want to offer our thanks for your continued resilience and ongoing commitment to supporting your patients and staff during the pandemic.

This letter follows on from the one sent out by John Burns on Friday 10 December, 2021. We are writing to update you on a change to the asymptomatic Healthcare Worker (HCW) LFD testing policy from twice weekly to daily testing, as well as a move from Innova 25 and Orient Gene 7 test kits to Orient Gene 20 LFD test kits.

This letter also highlights the measures that you should continue to take to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19, including the new Omicron variant. As you will be aware there is already community transmission of Omicron within Scotland. We are therefore urging everyone to do their part and use the tools and guidance we currently have in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19.

Asymptomatic LFD testing for Healthcare Workers

The evidence emerging is that Omicron has a higher rate of transmission than other variants. This is of particular concern for healthcare staff and the individuals you provide care to, as they may be more vulnerable to the COVID-19 infection.

As early identification of cases is even more important with the new Omicron variant, **we are strongly encouraging all HCWs to test daily.**

We are asking Health boards to phase in daily testing from Friday 17th December. How Boards choose to manage this roll out is to be decided locally in light of local circumstances however, we would encourage patient facing staff and those working over festive period to be prioritised.

The phasing of this roll out ensures that we are able to direct the kits we have, to protect those most at risk of severe ill health or death as a result of COVID-19 infection.

NSS logistics have been in touch with Board procurement leads to ascertain current LFD testing stocks. Delivery of stock is being coordinated to ensure availability over the festive period.

From the
Chief Medical Officer
Chief Nursing Officer
National Clinical Director
Director for Primary Care

17 December 2021

DL (2021) 51

For action

NHS Scotland Chairs,
NHS Scotland Chief Executives,
Health Board Single Points of Contact for testing
LFD testing Board Leads
Chief Officers Health and Social Care Partnerships
Local Authorities
HR Directors,
Medical Directors,
Nurse Directors,
Primary Care Leads,
Directors of Pharmacy,
Directors of Public Health,
Directors of Dentistry,
Optometric Advisors,
All Independent Contractors (Dental, Pharmacy, General Practice and Optometry),
Infection Control Managers
Infection Control Doctors
Infection Control Nurses

Enquiries

Scottish Government
Directorate for Chief Nursing Officer
Email: cno@gov.scot

Further guidance on workplace led testing is available through [staff testing guidance](#).

Continued LFD testing remains critical, as vaccinated people are more likely to be asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms. LFD testing is the only method of screening that we can access daily that will pick up asymptomatic carriage. Please note that we ask that HCWs access a PCR test even if only experiencing mild symptoms, or if they have received a positive LFD test.

We strongly ask that all HCWs record their test results (positive, negative and void) via the NSS [COVID Testing Portal](#). It is now essential that we get an accurate understanding of the rate of transmission of COVID-19 in healthcare workers and, importantly, the impact of the virus on the workforce. As well as this, recording of all test results helps us monitor prevalence more generally of the virus in our communities.

Primary Care/ Independent Contractors

We also intend for patient facing primary care staff (general practice, pharmacy, optometry, dentistry) to move to daily testing.

The supply of LFD kits to primary care currently operates on a push basis meaning that independent contractors receive new supplies every 7-8 weeks. As they are due to receive the next supply of LFD kits in late December or early January, many premises will unlikely have enough remaining stock to move to daily testing immediately.

If premises do have the capacity to begin testing daily prior to receiving new stock, then they should do so. For those unable to do so, **we will do all we can to accelerate delivery and improve supply to independent contractors.**

Move from Innova 25s/Orient Gene 7s (OG7s) to Orient Gene 20s (OG20s)

As daily testing will mean more stock is needed, we are bringing forward the launch date of OG20s LFD testing kits.

Please be advised that the phased roll out of OG20s will commence from Monday 20 December.

OG20s are approved for use as ‘assisted-testing’ kits, however we are able to use these tests as self-testing kits for health and social care staff.

All training materials, including electronic instructions for use (eIFU), which is to be used in place of the instructions in the box, will be available on TURAS and Scottish Government's webpages from Monday 20th December 2021.

The training materials will include:

- Electronic Instructions for use (eIFU)
- One page summary IFU (to be issued with the boxes of kit to end users)
- A video of how to self-test
- A poster of the differences between all test kits used by HCWs to date

OG20s are similar to OG7s, the differences being the number of kits in each box and the buffer solution will be spread over two bottles, which are required to be portioned across all 20 tests, as opposed to the solution being inside individual vials (as is the case with OG7s). The solution from this bottle is to be used as the solution for all tests in the box.

Health Boards/ Primary Care Independent Contractors will be asked at point of ordering LFDs to confirm that all staff have completed the required training for using the lateral flow test supplied.

Please note, all stocks of current testing kits (Innova 25s or OG7s) are to be used before distributing OG20s to HCWs.

For more information on Innova 25s, OG7s and OG20s please see [here](#).

Changes to exemption to LFD testing within 90 days of a positive PCR test

With the emergence of Omicron and the evidence around potential reinfections there has been a change to the guidance on exemption from testing with LFDs within 90 days of a positive PCR test.

Emerging evidence of higher rates of reinfection with Omicron, means there is a case for using LFDs within the 90 day period. LFDs are not as sensitive as PCR and will not pick up "residual" nucleic acid, which is thought to be the main cause of extended positivity in PCR tests.

The change to the LFD exemption is reflected in the updated [guidance on asymptomatic LFD testing for healthcare workers](#).

Changes to LFD test kit log

Previously Health Boards, Primary Care and Independent Contractors were required to maintain a locally managed Test Kit Log to capture the collection point details, test participant name, contact phone number and the lot number of the test kit for the purpose of MHRA traceability.

To facilitate distribution of kits and reduce administrative burden on settings until universal traceability is implemented across all asymptomatic testing services, this requirement for collection of personal data will be paused.

Health Boards, Primary Care/ Independent Contractors will take responsibility for supporting any product recall by MHRA/ UKHSA.

A product recall may be done through a multi-channel mass-communication approach with HCWs, including in person, through email, other digital media and bulletin announcements etc.

The new requirements for test kit logging include the following:

1. LOT number (written on the test kit)
2. Number of LFD kits distributed
3. Date of distribution
4. Site / event distributed

The test kit log should be kept for 12 months from the last entry on the log (for data retention purposes).

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

As you know, IPC measures, when implemented correctly, are a key safeguard against COVID-19 and other transmittable infections. When IPC measures are relaxed, such as when masks are taken off to use the phone, or people stand closer together, especially in break-rooms, social or work gatherings, the virus is given the opportunity to spread, which can lead to outbreaks. As the winter progresses and we manage the risk of highly infectious variants, it remains crucial that all healthcare staff pay critical attention to, and remain compliant with, IPC measures. We know the efforts you and your colleagues are taking to follow IPC guidance to keep people safe. We ask that you follow the guidance contained in the [Winter Respiratory Addendum](#).

COVID Vaccinations and Boosters

In addition to IPC measures, COVID-19 vaccination has played a vital role in minimising the impact of the virus and

the likelihood of severe illness and hospitalisation. We thank all who have completed their two doses of the vaccination and have come forward for their booster dose. We encourage those who are still to organise their booster dose to do so as a priority.

Book your vaccination online:
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/hscwvaccination.>

Drop in appointments are now available in most NHS boards. Further information on booking your appointment, including the contact details for the vaccine helpline are available at NHS Inform.

Continued support through the winter period

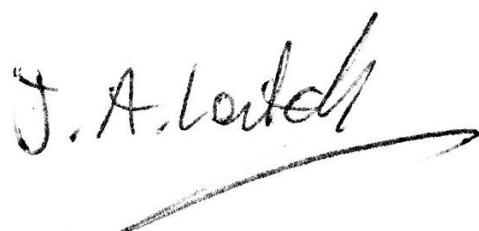
We will continue to support you by working with our partners in Public Health Scotland, NSS and ARHAI, to keep you informed, and update guidance in line with evidence and science, with involvement of sector representatives.

I would like once again to thank you and your staff for your continued efforts to follow and promote these measures.

Yours sincerely,



DR GREGOR SMITH
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



PROFESSOR JASON LEITCH CBE
NATIONAL CLINICAL DIRECTOR

A. McLell

Professor Alex McMahon
Chief Nursing Officer

Tim McDonnell

Tim McDonnell
Director of Primary Care