

Hello,

Please see an update to guidance for asymptomatic testing for social care.

PAUSING LFD ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING FOR SOCIAL CARE STAFF, VISITORS AND UNPAID CARERS – SEPTEMBER 2022

Clinical advice on a four UK nation basis is that remaining asymptomatic testing in social care can now be paused. There is consensus that we are now in a downward trajectory from the most recent wave, with prevalence and other epidemiological indicators improving. In addition, vaccination continues to offer protection against hospitalisation and harm across all ages groups. Changes to testing will be kept under clinical review.

We ask, based on this advice, that asymptomatic testing is **paused** across all social care settings including visitors to care homes and unpaid carers. We committed to provide a lead in time for implementation of any new testing policy change. Therefore, implementation of the pause should be in place by the 28th September 2022 but earlier moves are to be encouraged and we would advise taking immediate effect where this is possible.

There is **no need to use up existing supplies of LFDs** ahead of pausing commencing and we recommend that a residual stock is kept for ongoing symptomatic testing for staff, but also in the event that clinical advice is that testing should resume. National Services Scotland (NSS) will work with settings on this basis.

As communicated previously, weekly asymptomatic PCR testing for care home staff has also stopped.

We will update our testing information pages at the following link [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): social care and community based testing guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19/social-care-and-community-based-testing-guidance/pages/1-1-introduction-and-what-to-do-if-you-are-a-care-worker-or-care-home-staff.aspx) and changes will also be made to the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual September 2022: [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual: Appendix 22 - Community IPC COVID-19 Pandemic \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/nipcm/appendix-22-community-ipc-covid-19-pandemic/)

Asymptomatic testing for care home admissions from hospital and community – no change in guidance

Asymptomatic testing for admission to a care home, either from a hospital setting or from the community, **will continue**. This can be a LFD test.

Ongoing symptomatic testing for staff working in client facing roles providing close personal care and support – no change in guidance

There is **no change to the guidance for staff working in client facing roles who are symptomatic**; if staff have respiratory symptoms then they should undertake a LFD test, and if positive, isolate for a minimum of 5 days. After 5 days, staff working

with patients and service users in face-to-face settings can return to work when they have had 2 consecutive negative LFD test results (taken at least 24 hours apart). The first LFD test should only be taken 5 days after the day their symptoms started (or the day their first positive test was taken if they did not have symptoms); Day 0 is the date of the onset of symptoms.

If both LFD test results are negative, they may return to work immediately after the second negative LFD test result, provided they meet the criteria below:

- They feel well enough to work, and do not have a high temperature
- A risk assessment is done and consideration is given to redeployment (if they work with individuals whose immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness despite vaccination), until 10 days after their symptoms started (or the day their first positive test was taken if they did not have symptoms)
- They continue to comply with current infection control precautions
- If the day 5 LFD test is positive, they should continue to test daily until they have received two negative LFD test results, taken 24 hrs apart. If the staff member's LFD test result is positive on the 10th day, they should discuss this with their line manager who may undertake a risk assessment to facilitate a return to work

Those not working in such client facing roles do not require testing before going back to work, as long as they feel well and do not have a high temperature.

Visitors and carers (with the rest of the population) do not need to undertake symptomatic testing but instead are advised to follow Covid sense ([COVID sense | NHS inform](#)) and if not well should not visit family and friends in a social care or healthcare setting.

Outbreak testing – no change in guidance

Local Health Protection teams will continue to advise what testing should happen in the event of an outbreak.

Covid and Flu Vaccination – Autumn/Winter 2022

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind the Health and Social Care Sector of the important vaccination and the protection it offers staff and those they care for and support.

As you may be aware, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has issued advice for the Winter COVID-19 and flu programme recommending those most at risk, or those who come into regular contact with those most at risk, will soon become eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine dose to maximise their protection over winter. Where possible, this will be co-administered with the flu vaccine, which is a safe and effective way to deliver protection.

Online booking Portal for frontline Health & Social Care Workers (HSCWs):

- The portal is open to frontline HSCWs

- It can be accessed, along with other information on the programme and eligibility, via [Winter vaccines | NHS inform](#)
- The direct portal page link is [Login - Customer Service \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Vaccination - Carers

Carers 16+ are eligible for both Covid and flu vaccination this winter. The majority will be called for vaccination later in the programme, as part of the 'at risk' group. At this point appointments can be booked via the portal, or the helpline for those who don't have digital access.

The only exception is that the over 65s will shortly be sent letters with timed appointments. In those letters, it will say that unpaid carers are eligible for vaccination and give instructions on how they can book. If someone they care for gets a letter, the carer can book their appointment from that time.