

COVID-19 NEWSLETTER

NEWS, GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE PROVIDERS IN TORBAY

Phase 2 Serology (antibody) testing for social care staff

As outlined in the national guidance, phase 1 serology (antibody) testing is now being offered to NHS staff. Social care staff are included in phase 2 of serology testing and we are awaiting national guidance on this. A testing group consisting of NHS and social care staff has agreed that until clear national guidance is received, serology testing for social care staff will not be made available. This is based on the current capacity available for phlebotomy and testing in laboratories across the acute hospitals. We need to carefully monitor tests to ensure capacity is used appropriately.

In relation to antibody testing, it is very important to remember the following:

- The antibody test is a venous blood test
- A positive test result only means that an individual has had COVID-19 in the past
- It does not mean you are currently infected, so you should continue to work as normal
- Even if you receive a positive test, you still have to follow all social distancing and infection control measures
- There is currently no evidence to show that a positive test means someone cannot be re-infected with the virus, or pass it on to others, or have immunity
- The test is only available to staff, not family members.

The antibody testing programme will provide information on the prevalence of COVID-19 in the peninsula to help better understand how the disease spreads. It works alongside the swab testing programme, which confirms whether or not someone currently has the virus. For any queries, please email the [testing cell](#)

Testing

The flowchart included in the attachments folder sent alongside this newsletter explains the current testing programmes and how to access these. However, please follow the guidance below **for symptomatic residents, clients and staff in care home and supported living services:**

FOR SYMPTOMATIC RESIDENTS/CLIENTS IN CARE HOMES & SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES

All referrals for swabs to go to directly from the provider to:

- sdhis.carehomeswabrequest@nhs.net or 01626 204950 (8am – 5pm 7 days a week) with a completed referral spreadsheet. (see swab template attached with this newsletter)
- Please also ensure you notify:
- Public Health England swhpt@phe.gov.uk 0300 303 8162
- Torbay Quality Assurance & Improvement team (QAIT): tsdft.torbaycovid19careproviders@nhs.net 01803 697 390
- You can carry out the above in one email to the swab request team copying in PHE and QAIT but make it clear within the body of the email that this is a notification to PHE. Ensure that you remain GDPR compliant and use your NHS email.

A swab referral template has been attached with this newsletter. Requests for the swabs to be undertaken will be sent to the relevant community nursing team who will contact the provider to arrange for a swab to be taken.

The swab request line will notify the initial referrer of the result, and it is for the referrer to notify the individual of the result.

Please note this process can take up to 48 hours from referral to result.

REFERRALS FOR SYMPTOMATIC STAFF

- The staff member will need to contact the staff swabbing hub directly on **01803 655783**.
- The Manager of the Service Provider must ensure that PHE and QAIT (contacts listed above) are notified via email that you have a staff member who is symptomatic.
- The Manager of the Service Provider must notify PHE and QAIT of the results as soon as they are known.

STOP PRESS - Swabbing and Testing Webinar

Swabbing and testing is the focus of this week's care home webinar (Thursday 16 July from 2 – 3pm). The webinar will outline the latest Public Health England guidance, swabbing technique plus a local care provider's experience of testing. **Do encourage as many as possible of your teams to join this webinar as it will give key information on how to take swabs. This will be needed as we move to more regular testing for both staff and residents in all our care homes.**

Join the webinar on [Thursday 16 July from 2pm – 3pm](#). All upcoming webinar links are on the PEN website: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/providerengagementnetwork/document/webinars/>

Facemasks – weekly reminder!

Please remind all staff of the continuing importance of wearing masks properly to keep our homes free from infection and protect both staff and residents. There are many reports of masks dangling round the neck or pushed up on the head which means they lose all value in infection control. Staff need to make sure they get some fresh air and have a tea or coffee but if they do – please remind them to take the mask off and put on a new one, rather than remove it temporarily. It makes all the difference.

NHS Devon CCG: Caring for Care Homes Newsletter

The Caring for Care Homes Newsletter provides quarterly updates for care homes. [The latest newsletter as well as previous editions can be found by clicking here.](#)

The Caring for Care homes COVID-19 Pandemic Special Guidance Sheet can also be found by [clicking here](#). This guidance sheet offers advice for care homes on the points that must be considered prior to implementing the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for re-use of medicines during the COVID-19 outbreak, if necessary medicines are “out-of-stock” and there is an immediate need for them.



Delivering safe, face-to-face adult day care

As the restrictions of lockdown are eased, SCIE have released guidance to support you, day care managers, social workers, commissioners and providers, to restart or continue activities. It is focused on community-based day services, day centres (with and without personal care), including specialised day centre environments, and those with outdoor spaces. [Please click here to access the guidance](#)

Caring for Care Homes Webpage

A reminder of the Caring for Care Homes webpage which provides various resources to support care home providers. The resources have been produced in collaboration with GPs, pharmacists, care homes managers and social care commissioners across Devon. [You can access the webpage by clicking here.](#)