

By email

6 July 2021

Dear Visitor

Self-test Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing for Visitors to Hospice settings in Northern Ireland

The Public Health Agency (PHA) and Department of Health (DoH) are implementing a programme to offer Lateral Flow Device Tests to visitors to a number of different settings across Northern Ireland, including hospices. Lateral Flow tests will be offered to all visitors as an additional infection prevention control measure. Testing is optional and visiting will not be restricted if you chose not to take the test, however it is hoped that where possible, visitors will participate in this programme.

Whilst testing is voluntary the more people who participate in the testing programme the more likely we are to identify those who may positive but not have symptoms. Regular self-testing using LFDs can help us slow the spread of COVID-19 by identifying those who are infectious so that they can isolate promptly.

The tests are quick and simple to use and can be undertaken in the visitor's own home prior to visiting their loved one. Packs of tests may be collected at the hospice where staff will explain the process to you and ensure you are confident in how the tests should be used and the results registered. Visitors will be asked to complete 2 LFD tests per week and your consent will also be sought to store your data in line with data protection laws. Full instructions are provided in the test kits and further information is also available on the PHA website at [Testing for visitors to hospices | HSC Public Health Agency \(hscni.net\)](http://www.hscni.net)

Improving Your Health and Wellbeing

Please remember that while testing visitors can reduce the risk associated with visiting, it does not completely remove the risk of infection. When used alongside robust Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and handwashing, it can support hospices to safely maintain a balance between infection control and the vital benefits of visiting to the health and wellbeing of residents. **All visitors are strongly encouraged to use the LFD tests prior to visiting a Hospice.**

Friends and relatives have a very important role and responsibility to help our Health Care staff keep their loved ones safe. Please think of yourself as part of the team and by taking a test you will be playing your part in helping to protect your loved one and other patients as well as their carers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aidan Dawson', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Aidan Dawson
Chief Executive