

BY EMAIL
Care Home Managers

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Date 15 June 2022

Dear Care Home Manager

UPDATE TO LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR TESTING DURING AN OUTBREAK OF COVID-19

From Tuesday 21st June, PCR testing for COVID-19 in an outbreak scenario will be moved back to Pillar 1. Pillar 2 should continue to be used for outbreak testing up to and including Monday 20th June.

Where an outbreak is declared close to the changeover date, day zero testing may be done in Pillar 2 and the second round of testing at day 4-7 will be done in Pillar 1. Care homes should contact the PHA Health Protection Duty Room (HPDR) for advice if required, who will provide support on a case by case basis.

This letter replaces guidance issued on 5 May 2022 which asked care homes to use Pillar 2 for outbreak testing. The temporary move to Pillar 2 was to ensure that best use was made of the Northern Ireland allocation of national testing capacity and to support care homes manage their testing pathway.

HSC Trusts have also been informed of the change and will be asked to support care homes in the provision of PCR test kits in the event of an outbreak being declared.

Care homes in outbreak should continue to use LFD tests in addition to PCR tests for whole home testing required at day 0 and day 4-7. This will facilitate early isolation and management of cases whilst awaiting PCR results. LFD test kits can continue to be ordered through salesforce.

Care homes should contact 119 with any issues related to testing. The service is currently operating Monday – Friday: 8am – 6pm and Saturday and Sunday: 9am – 1pm. Please note that there will be no test kit deliveries of LFDs on the 12th or 13th of July, this service will recommence deliveries on the 14th July.

Apart from moving PCR testing back to Pillar 1, all other advice regarding testing during an outbreak remains unchanged.

Any questions regarding outbreak management should be referred to the PHA Health protection Duty Room in the first instance.

HPDR Tel: 0300 555 0119 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

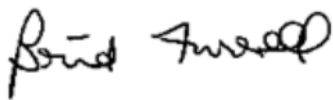
For non-urgent communication only, email:

PHA.DutyRoom@hscni.net

During evenings, weekends and bank/public holidays, contact first on call Public Health Doctor via ambulance control 028 9040 4045.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Dr Brid Farrell
Deputy Director of Public Health

cc
SPPG Chief Executive
HSC Trust Chief Executives
RQIA Chief Executive