

Extracts from the letter from DHSC testing group

Notice to care homes to stop using Randox test kits across the National Testing Programme 15<sup>th</sup> July. Homes to retain the kits and store them appropriately while waiting for further instructions. In the meantime, it is important that these kits are not returned to the programme, the labs or destroyed.

Replacement kits will be distributed as soon as possible in order to complete re-testing. All care homes who require replacement kits to complete regular retesting or complete their first round of whole home testing have now been identified. Replacement kits have been delivered to the majority of these homes, with the remaining receiving theirs next week.

Timelines for rolling out regular testing in care homes have been revised and are now as follows:

- We will now reach all care homes for older people and people with dementia by the 7 September 2020.
- If you have already started regular testing, there may be a wait for your second month's order to be fulfilled until we have reached all care homes for older people and people with dementia.
- All other adult care homes will be able to start to place orders for test kits from the 31 August 2020.

In the period up to 7 September, the following steps to target testing capacity where it is most needed will be taken:

- Priority will be given to providing test kits to care homes in areas on the Contain Framework Local Authority Watchlist as set out in the Weekly PHE Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Surveillance Report
- All care homes that have symptomatic residents will continue to be able to access testing through their local PHE Health Protection Team.

Care homes are being urged to carry out testing throughout the whole week, especially on Friday, Saturday and Sunday where this is possible. This will enable the amount of care home testing to increase as it will make full use of the available testing capacity in labs.

It has been recognised that registering tests individually is unnecessarily burdensome. Therefore pleased from the 7 August 2020, care homes will be able to bulk register tests, which will speed up the process and alleviate the administrative burden. This new digital offer has been tested with care home managers before launch to ensure that it meets their needs. Guidance will be issued about how the bulk registration process will work and we will cover it in our regular webinar.