

# NHS Borders COVID-19 Care Home Testing Plan



Version	Date	Governance
1	30 July 2020	Authors: NHS Borders Covid-19 Test Policy Team Contact: Department of Public Health 01896 82600

## **Background**

1.1 NHS Board area: NHS Borders

LA/HSCP area(s): Scottish Borders Council

1.2 NHS Borders has 26 care homes. Twenty-three care homes for older people:(17 Private / 6 LA); (547 beds / 156 beds respectively) and 3 care homes for adults with learning disabilities (all private with total of 51 beds).

## **2 Enhanced outbreak testing**

- 2.1 NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council have developed a local outbreak management plan



COVID19 outbreaks  
and incidents response

in line with national guidance-attached. The Borders has experienced one care home outbreak to date. This outbreak is no longer live. Outbreak management advice is given as soon as a new suspected case is identified within a care home. Testing of symptomatic residents or staff is completed within 24 hours of the reporting of symptoms to Public Health and where possible tests are prioritised for processing locally to expedite the outbreak response. Where a result is positive, arrangements will be made for all symptomatic and/or asymptomatic staff and residents to be tested as soon as practicable. Timescales for outbreak testing can be found in Appendix 1.

- 2.2 NHS Borders is able to deploy a local Dynamic Response Unit (DRU) to carry out testing on-site for care home residents and staff. Further repeat testing of all staff will continue weekly until the outbreak is declared over. NHS Borders is aware of the process to be followed to request external support such as the mobile testing unit (MTU) should this be required to support the response to local outbreak testing.
- 2.3 Enhanced outbreak testing includes offers of testing in the following categories:
- Testing residents and staff in care homes with a confirmed case of COVID-19
  - Staff in linked homes where they work between sites run by the same operator, following an outbreak in one. All IMTs now need to consider this issue during their consideration of the outbreak.
- 2.4 We have arranged a rapid testing response for any care home where a patient has symptoms and we have low threshold for testing. This includes a training plan and roll out so that staff in care homes can carry out testing for residents / staff (see section 5).

### **3 Asymptomatic staff testing**

- 3.1 It is estimated that in the Borders between 1300-1500 care home staff tests need to be offered each week. There is currently no capacity within the existing NHS testing team to visit homes for this purpose. The testing team provide support to homes with identifying testing routes and implementation. It is recognised that neither NHS Borders nor NHS Lothian laboratories have the capacity to manage this high level of additional tests required to roll out asymptomatic testing on an ongoing weekly basis.
- 3.2 We are working closely with Scottish Borders Council and local care home providers to ensure all care home staff are currently being offered weekly testing through the Social Care Portal (SCP) or local NHS drive through facility at Borders General Hospital. All care homes are being encouraged to utilise the Social Care Portal route, it is expected to be a vastly more convenient route for staff given the rural location of many of the care homes and lack of transport for many.
- 3.3 Between care homes there is a wide variation in the numbers of staff accepting the offer of testing. Public Health work continually work closely with care providers to identify issues with testing uptake and supporting the resolution of any implementation difficulties. Care homes who are having difficulty with testing are also contacted by the Director of Nursing to encourage uptake. The Director of Nursing also holds regular meetings with care homes to discuss implementation issues.
- 3.4 Social Care Portal test results are communicated directly to the care home manager. Managers are aware of the importance to exclude any positive staff member from work for 7 days self-isolation per national guidance. It is crucial that Public Health are notified immediately of any positive result so further management can commence, including Track and Trace.
- 3.5 Should an outbreak be declared within any care home, routine asymptomatic testing will cease with immediate effect and the enhanced outbreak response will be initiated.
- 3.6 In addition to NHS Borders local drive through facility, and the use of SCP testing access, NHS Borders note that other national testing facilities may also be available to support the testing of care home staff and are aware of the process to be followed to request external support such as the mobile testing unit (MTU); employer portal (EP); public portals.

#### **4 Resident surveillance testing**

- 4.1 Resident surveillance testing is currently being discussed by DPHs and the CMO. NHS Borders has not yet implemented any resident surveillance testing subject to the receipt of further guidance and understood this was to be produced following the work in two Board areas to pilot an approach.
- 4.2 NHS Borders await national guidance before implementing any testing of asymptomatic residents (outside of an outbreak). Symptomatic residents will continue to be tested per HPS guidance.

#### **5 Staff training**

- 5.1 NHS Borders has implemented a rolling programme of training with care home staff to enable them to perform COVID-19 swabbing of symptomatic residents and asymptomatic staff. Enhanced PPE instruction is given alongside this training in line with HPS guidance. Training has been well received by the care homes and has aided implementation of testing through use of the SCP. Trained staff within care homes has provided improved resilience within the provision of testing allowing both day and night staff to have equitable access to asymptomatic testing.
- 5.2 Initial training of nominated staff from each care home is on target for completion by the 19<sup>th</sup> June and a continued rolling training programme planned.

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Positive results and actions**

<b>TIMESCALE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>Within 4 hours of positive result</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. HPT will advise on immediate control measures and gather relevant information</li><li>2. Exclude positive staff</li></ol>
<b>Within 18 hours</b>	Convene where required an initial Problem Assessment Group (PAG) to augment existing information and outline key actions
<b>Within first 24 hours</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify immediate contacts of resident with staff and residents</li><li>2. Identify/arrange testing for all symptomatic residents, staff &amp; household members</li></ol>
<b>Within 48 hours</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify and arrange testing for all other residents</li><li>2. Identify and arrange testing for all other staff on duty</li><li>3. Identify and arrange testing for all staff on or off duty who have been in the home in the 2 days prior to patient symptom</li><li>4. Identify and arrange testing, as appropriate, for all regular visitors to the home</li></ol>
<b>On receipt of any further tests confirming presence of the virus</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Exclude staff</li><li>2. Ensure all further contacts of resident or staff have been accounted for</li></ol>

*Taken from 'COVID19 outbreaks and incidents in Borders Care Homes: Health Protection Team involvement' V6 29/06/20*