

Regular retesting rolled out for care home staff and residents

- Care home staff to be given coronavirus tests every week and residents monthly from Monday to identify anyone with the virus and reduce transmission
- Repeat testing will be initially prioritised for care homes primarily looking after over 65s or those with dementia before being rolled out to all adult care homes
- The government's Vivaldi 1 care home study highlights the importance of regular staff testing while there is a higher prevalence in care homes

Staff will be tested for coronavirus weekly, while residents will receive a test every 28 days to prevent the spread of coronavirus in social care. This is in addition to intensive testing in any care home facing an outbreak, or at increased risk of an outbreak.

The new testing strategy comes following the latest advice from SAGE and new evidence from the Vivaldi 1 study indicating a higher prevalence in care homes, and therefore a case for frequent testing in care homes and their staff.

The Vivaldi 1 study, which surveyed almost 9,000 care home managers and analysed data from whole care home testing, identified the higher levels of the virus among care staff, particularly among temporary staff who work in multiple care settings. The study suggests that care home staff may be at increased risk of contracting the virus, which they may then pass on to others if they have no symptoms.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

Our response to this global pandemic has always been led by the latest scientific advice from world-class experts, and we will now offer repeat testing to staff and residents in care homes, starting with homes for elderly residents before expanding to the entire care home sector.

This will not only keep residents and care workers safe, but it will give certainty and peace of mind to the families who may be worried about their loved ones, and give staff the confidence to do what they do best.

Over the following 4 weeks, retesting will have been rolled out to all care homes for over 65s and those with dementia who have registered to receive retesting. Repeat testing will be extended to include all care homes for working age adults in August.

Minister for Care, Helen Whately said:

Social care and its workforce are at the front line of this unprecedented pandemic with many of our care homes looking after those who are most at risk from coronavirus.

It is our priority to protect care residents and staff and testing is a crucial part of that. That's why from Monday residents will be offered monthly tests, and staff will be tested every week. This is so important as it means care workers can be sure they are providing the very best care without worrying if they are carrying the virus themselves.

We will work with local directors of public health to deliver an initial round of asymptomatic whole-home testing for staff and residents at the extra care housing and supported living settings at most clinical risk. The operational details of rolling out this testing to this sector are being worked through and more details will be provided shortly.

In May, the government launched a [Care Home Support Package](#), backed by the £600 million Infection Control Fund, to minimise risks in care homes by limiting movement of staff.

David Pearson CBE, Chair of the Adult Social Care Support Taskforce has written to care providers this week outlining the importance of reducing movement between care homes, making best use of the Infection Control Fund.

David Pearson CBE, Chair of the Adult Social Care Support Taskforce said:

Protecting staff and residents inside our care homes is an absolute priority throughout all phases of the pandemic. Testing is clearly an important part of this, particularly regular testing in key areas where prevalence is likely to be high.

This new phase in our testing strategy is an important step in protecting the 1.5 million care home staff across the country and the residents they care for. We are prioritising those care homes for older residents and those with dementia, but will expand this even further by August. □

The Vivaldi 1 study results will be published today by the Office for National Statistics and on GOV.UK at 9:30am on Friday 3 July.

Asymptomatic testing in domiciliary care settings will be guided by the results from the PHE prevalence study into domiciliary care.