

Sent via emailTel : 028 95363926
Fax : 028 95363126
Web Site: www.hscboard.hscni.net20th April 2021**To:** All General Practices in N Ireland
Dalriada Urgent Care
Western Urgent Care

Dear Colleagues,

Rollout of lateral flow testing devices for COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic patient-facing staff in primary care.

Asymptomatic staff self-testing using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) will be offered to all general practice staff in the next 4-6 weeks on a voluntary basis . This type of testing aims to find asymptomatic cases of COVID 19 by testing patient facing practice staff regularly twice a week. Due to the relatively decreased sensitivity of LFDs compared to PCR, twice weekly testing is required. LFDs are point-of-care and deliver a result in 20mins. This approach to testing has been agreed with MHRA who have also approved the use of the Salesforce system to distribute lateral flow test kits to general practices for this purpose. The importance of this is that we know now that up to 1/3 of those infected with Covid display no symptoms but are infectious.

Another aspect which is important for the timing of the introduction of LFDs is the current low prevalence combined with the risk of a further surge so it is timely to introduce this and encourage familiarity with it. It is also being offered to other primary care colleagues such as dentists, optometrists and pharmacy staff.


General practice is now invited to register for the online system (SALESFORCE) to order lateral flow testing devices. Please complete the survey monkey link <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LHL5WBX> within the coming week. This information will be passed to SALESFORCE.

Following receipt of this information, practices will be registered on the SALESFORCE system which they will use to manage the ordering process in future. Practices will receive an invitation to order and then log onto SALESFORCE to complete their

order. This process will take a number of weeks from providing the data to being 'live' on the system. SALESFORCE will be responsible for sending out LFD kits to practices. There will be a recurrent ordering process for practices then after.

Thank you for all your ongoing work in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret O'Brien".

Dr Margaret O'Brien
Head of General Medical Services

Appendix 1

Summary of the approach

Self-testing of patient facing primary care staff

- Staff will be asked to read the information leaflet and watch a short video demonstration of how to take the test. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7IwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>
- Primary care staff must report their results via the NHS Digital online platform. This platform can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>
- If a staff member has a positive LFD they are expected to book an urgent (same day) PCR test by at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. [DNA sequencing is critically important to detect mutations and variants of concern. This is why a PCR after a positive LFD is essential. Booking a PCR test is done through the gov.uk testing site \(Pillar 2\) . As of April 2021 there is more than sufficient testing capacity to ensure tests are available within 24 hours](#)
- Anyone who tests positive with a lateral flow antigen test will be required to self-isolate with their household until the result of the PCR test is known. They will be contacted by the contact tracing service in the PHA following a positive LFT provided the LFD result has been put through the app
- Tests should be undertaken at home before you go to work.
- Test kits should be ordered for every patient-facing employee in the practice. This should include any temporary patient-facing staff who provide Health and Social Care services through the contractor but are employed through an agency or other kind of temporary arrangements (e.g. locums). It may be wise to allow some extra ordering for locums. Contractors should also ensure that their delivery address is kept up to date on SALESFORCE
- Practices should distribute one box to each member of patient-facing staff as soon as possible after delivery. Each box will contain 7 lateral flow tests, enough for 3.5 weeks. At least 2 boxes will be received for each staff member with each order..
- A standard operating procedure (SOP) for this will be available on the PHA website.
- Retesting is not usually done within 90days of a positive LFD / PCR.