

Lothian System Testing in Care Homes Programme

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<i>Date of revision:</i>	<i>30th June 2020</i>

Lothian System testing for care home workers – summary

The Lothian system – incorporating the 4 Integration Joint Boards and NHS Lothian – is fully committed to delivering a robust approach to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in the care homes in the Lothian. It recognises that this needs to be based on working in partnership with our care home operators and their staff and applying solid principles of public health management.

We understand this requirement to be in three parts;

- Management of outbreaks;
- Surveillance;
- Testing of asymptomatic care home workers.

In the Lothians there are;

- 109 care homes registered for older people;
- A further 34 registered for adults under the age of 65;
- A further 45 registered for children.

At this point, the focus is on institutions registered for older people and adults. Since the 1st of March NHS Lothian's Public Health Directorate has worked with 81 of these 143 homes to manage outbreaks.

1. Outbreak management

Our outbreak management approach is outlined in the appended slides. Our intention is that all staff and residents in a home with an outbreak will be tested within two weeks (and after an appropriate deep clean of the home) of the outbreak being discovered.

We are equally clear that these workers will need to be offered testing on a weekly basis ongoing as part of the asymptomatic care home worker strand.

Tests for homes in outbreak status are and have been processed through our own labs, which have an ongoing capacity of 1200 tests per day. As it stands, the daily usage of this testing capacity has averaged around 850 tests a day in total, covering new cases, hospital admissions with suspected COVID, NHS staff testing, testing of staff in care homes under outbreaks, admitted patients over the age of 70, our community hub, etc. Our priority order for the use of this capacity is as follows;

1. Clinical care or placement
2. Outbreak management
3. Staff attendance at work
4. Epidemiology and surveillance
5. Compliance with guidance or policy

In addition, we are an overflow lab for other health boards, and we would note that the figure of 850 does not yet include the ramping up of capacity for pre-operative testing, which we estimate will be roughly 100 tests per day, for surveillance testing in care homes (50-100 tests per day) or any other reason we may require capacity, such as a rise in cases in the community. We therefore consider our current capacity of 1200 NHS Lothian lab tests to be fully allocated.

2. Surveillance

As noted above, the capacity for testing to support the surveillance programme is provided through the NHSL labs. Homes are identified for surveillance testing following consultation between the HSCP and the Directorate of Public Health.

3. Weekly testing for asymptomatic care home workers

The estimate from our HSCP Joint Directors is that we have in the region of 10,000-12,000 care home workers across the Lothians. We would need to assume that all of these would take up the offer of testing if it could be done in an appropriate fashion.

Capacity

Therefore our **daily** capacity and demand calculation would be as follows;

Category	Low estimate	High estimate
DEMAND		
Baseline demand	850	950
Identified expansions in surveillance, elective re-start	150	300
Care worker routine testing	1500	1750
TOTAL DEMAND	2500	3000
CAPACITY		
NHSL Lab capacity	1200	1500 (from July)
Social care portal	1400	1400
TOTAL CAPACITY	2600	2900

This in turn translates into a range of outcomes as follows;

Net position (tests)	Low capacity	High capacity
Low demand	+100	+400
High demand	-400	+100

In early June we worked with National Services Scotland to agree access to four mobile testing units to provide the capacity that would be required. We were then given access to an increased number of tests from the Social Care Portal (SCP) and this means we believe we have **sufficient capacity** to meet the ask. We have not included capacity from other sources such as the regional testing centre at Edinburgh Airport.

Process

Our Joint Directors have written to all care home operators in their areas encouraging them to register with the social care portal and have been told that, in the first instance, all 109 care homes for older people had signed up by 19th June, and had placed orders. As it stands we have no way of independently verifying this. The 34 adult institutions are in the process of signing up and we expect this to be concluded by 1st July.

Our HSCP teams are working closely with all homes in their area to support them in using the care home huddle tool to capture data including data on care home testing. Each HSCP contacts their care home colleagues specifically on a Monday morning to check on progress last week and their plan for the coming week.

Our Public Health team describe a plan for homes that they will be in each week by close of play on the preceeding Friday. These homes are advised to stand down their self-testing for the week ahead.

Returns are scrutinised and summarised by each HSCP and then combined into the Lothian return.

Where a home records less than 50% of staff having had a test in a home without public health involvement, the HSCP team will contact that home to offer support and advice.

Ask from the Cabinet Secretary

For absolute clarity, the following table shows our responses to each of the 15 questions asked by the Cabinet Secretary in her letter of 4th June.

Cabinet secretary question	Lothian system answer
1 – how many outbreaks have been closed?	Since the start of the pandemic there have been 81 outbreaks across care home and closed settings. 20 of these are “live”(eg, in last 28 days) and 61 now completely closed.
2 – how many outbreaks are live?	20 outbreaks in the last 28 days (to 29 th June).
3 – when will testing of staff and residents in outbreak homes be complete	All homes that have had an outbreak have been tested at least once. When staff and residents are tested as part of an outbreak, the process of notification, immediate intervention through care home support, testing, contact tracing, isolation/support and reporting takes approx. 2 weeks.
4 – How will you address new outbreaks, and in what timescale?	As per our Enhanced Outbreak Response process, as outlined in appended.
5 – What resources you have in place to deliver on this work and whether you are satisfied that they are sufficient or require augmentation	Our Health Protection Team leads this response. While we believe we have sufficient resources currently, we are examining how to augment our team given the length and intensity of the pandemic so far and the impact on staff wellbeing. We also have support from HSCP teams.
6 – Your plan to secure additional testing capacity and ensure repeat testing in line with Scottish Government guidelines	We have sufficient internal lab capacity and it is for exactly these reasons that we prioritise use of this capacity as we have outlined.
7 – How you plan to deliver sample surveillance in your area?	We have worked through our HSCPs to roll out a train-the-trainer approach to ensure that care home workers can swab residents appropriately. Through daily huddles our Health Protection Team and HSCPs will identify “green” homes who we will request to undertake sampling and return to the NHSL labs.
8 – What is the frequency and scope of this surveillance?	We will seek to cover all of our homes for older people and take c.200-300 samples per week across residents and staff.

<p>9 – How are you ensuring you have sufficient capacity and resources in place to deliver?</p>	<p>Built into our laboratory capacity planning. Samples will be processed in NHSL labs. Swabbing is being done on a “train the trainer” basis by care home staff so as to prevent introducing new possible sources of infection. Points about resources – see point 5.</p>
<p>10 – Detailed information on how many care home staff in your area require to be tested and across how many settings</p>	<p>We estimate the number of care home workers across the Lothians to be between 10000 and 12000, across 143 adult and older people homes.</p>
<p>11 – how you plan to organise this as a routine testing regime, with weekly access to testing for staff</p>	<p>HSCP teams meet with care home operators daily at HSCP huddles and will reinforce the message to register with the social care portal and order self-testing kits from there.</p> <p>We understand that numbers of tests carried out will be collated by NSS but we will also seek a weekly update from our HSCPs</p>
<p>12 – Details of how you will schedule this and secure necessary testing capacity</p>	<p>Through the social care portal.</p>
<p>13- details of access routes for testing in NHS labs and via different route</p>	<p>Please see outline above.</p>
<p>14 – resources in place to support this testing programme</p>	<p>Through normal channels in supporting care homes and through the Social Care Portal</p>
<p>15 – How you will provide assurance that testing is taking place?</p>	<p>Again, we would expect this to come up through the huddle system and be reported there.</p> <p>However, we stress that these are not NHS or (in the main) local authority employees and so we do not have powers to enforce this, especially as low-paid staff may find it difficult to access other routes.</p> <p>We are currently focussed on support for those homes who are demonstrating less than 50% of staff tested.</p>