

Welcome to the latest Residential and Nursing Home communication from Hampshire and Isle of Wight (1 July 2020)

Dear Colleagues,

Please see below for essential COVID-19 updates on:

- COVID-19 Testing FAQs

Other information

- Verification of Expected Death – Guidance Consultation
- Wellbeing Support
- Retraction – hand sanitiser alert

COVID-19 Testing FAQs

Here are some of the questions often asked by care homes around testing:

Should I get a clearance screen for COVID-19 for a resident who has been previously positive?

No. There is no requirement to get a clearance screen for COVID-19, unless the person has very severe immunocompromise – you can discuss these cases with the HIOW IPC service if you need guidance.

Trying to get a negative screen following COVID-19 may put your resident at risk. The current swab test looks for fragments of COVID-19 virus but it does not distinguish between virus that is live (viable) or dead (inactive). Fragments of dead COVID-19 virus (inactive) can be recovered from a person's nose for around 5-6 weeks following infection. This does not mean your resident still has COVID-19 or is an infection risk to others. Trying to get a clearance swab may mean that the resident swabs positive for 5-6 weeks, meaning they stay in isolation unnecessarily, or miss vital appointments, or cannot go home to the community. Once the person has been isolated for 14 days and no longer has acute symptoms of COVID-19 (cough and loss of smell/taste may continue longer) they can come out of isolation.

How do I get a COVID-19 test on a person in the community awaiting admission to my care home?

If the person lives within Hampshire, Southampton or Portsmouth, testing prior to admission can be arranged in their own home by contacting hiow.c19ipc@nhs.net. If they live outside of this area, homes are advised to contact the CCG where the person lives to see if they have a Community Testing Service who can screen them. If not, the advice is to risk assess the person for exposure to COVID-19, ask them to self-isolate for 14 days prior to transfer and arrange screening once they are admitted to your home.

Can I shorten the period of isolation post discharge from hospital if I screen the resident for COVID-19 and they are negative?

No. The test is not predictive of whether the resident will go on to develop COVID-19. The test will only tell you that they do not have active disease at that moment in time. Even if (for example) you screen the resident on day 5 post hospital admission and they are negative, they could be incubating COVID-19 and develop active disease between days 6-14. As the incubation period for COVID-19 is up to 14 days, all residents must be isolated on discharge from hospital (inpatient) for 14 days.

Do I need to isolate my resident for 14 days if they attend an outpatient appointment at the hospital or another setting?

You need to risk assess this. If the resident has been transported to the appointment without sharing transport with others, has been able to maintain social distancing, has gone to a site with no COVID-19 (cold site) or taken other precautions like wearing a mask you may decide that the risk of them being exposed to COVID-19 is low and 14 days of isolation is not required.

When can we get antibody testing for care staff?

Antibody testing is currently being rolled out to the 'NHS family'. After this it will be made available to care homes.

As antibody tests require a whole blood sample, they are more difficult to do.

The antibody test only tells you that a person has had COVID-19 in the past. It does not tell you that they are immune to future COVID-19, or that they would be unable to pass it on to others if they came into contact with COVID-19 again in the future. Due to this, antibody tests are also no use in clinical management and will not change the way you can use/deploy staff etc. Staff must continue to wear full PPE and observe

hand hygiene and all other precautions, including social distancing, regardless of their antibody status.

Verification of Expected Death – Guidance Consultation

COVID-19: verification of expected death with clinical remote support – a consultation for social care providers and registered managers

Skills for care are working together with NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop supportive guidance and resources for the social care sector in line with the recently published government guidance '**COVID-19: verifying death in times of emergency**'.

They have developed consultation resources for the social care sector to support with decision-making, what to consider about the VOED process and a step-by-step process infographic:

Skills for care would like to hear your thoughts on the consultation resources and have created a short feedback survey. The survey closes at **17:00 on Tuesday 7 July** and can be found [here](#):

Wellbeing Support

Care providers and their staff have had to process and manage the enormous emotional impact of the COVID-19 crisis, which will have caused high levels of stress during this unique and unprecedented period.

We know some care homes and care providers have experienced staff, residents and clients being unwell and very sadly some people have died.

All areas are looking at how we can continue to support social care through the COVID-19 crisis and the Ilse of Wight have gathered some wellbeing and resilience tools to help managers and staff to support each other and look after wellbeing.

We know people react to unwanted change in different ways depending on many factors and for some of us, COVID-19 will expose us to very emotionally difficult experiences, which we must try and make some sense of.

Understanding our own and others' individual COVID journey is vital to aid not only how we “cope” with the “here and now” but how we can take the positives forward into the “new normal”.

Please see the Calmness and Resilience Guide for more information.

Medicines Optimisation useful information and training opportunities

Asthma UK has some really useful short videos demonstrating how to use different inhaler devices: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos>

This supports our care homes resource - Inhaler Technique and Respiratory Conditions Guidance Sheet. This and other guidance sheets can be found on the WHCCG website: <https://westhampshireccg.nhs.uk/medicines-optimisation/care-homes-meds/>

Retraction – hand sanitiser alert

Last week, an alert was issued around hand sanitiser in cars on hot days. This alert has been recalled following advice from the Fire Service - <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/News/debunking-the-myth-hand-sanitiser-in-cars-do-not-pose-a-fire-risk->