**28.02.21 LFD Comms**

Dear Executive Directors, Directors and Governors,

**Confirmatory PCR following an LFD positive result**

On the 27th January 2021, DHSC changed their Test and Trace policy. Until now, it has been a requirement for any positive LFD result to be followed up with a confirmatory PCR test. However, due to the high prevalence of coronavirus infections in England, confirmatory testing will temporarily be removed for LFD tests taken until prevalence lowers again. This means confirmatory PCR testing will no longer be required and a positive LFD test result will trigger the legal duty to self-isolate as well as contact tracing.

*Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will continue to use confirmatory PCR testing, in accordance with the decisions of their Chief Medical Officers.*

The HMPPS strategy for all staff to test once per week with PCR and twice per week with LFD remains the same.

**Re-testing with LFD or PCR following a positive**

*If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you should not take a repeat LFD or PCR test for 90 days. However, if, within those 90 days, you develop new symptoms, you must isolate immediately. We have previously been advised that retesting under LFD may be permitted after 10 days but still await final confirmation and therefore at this stage the 90 day timescale should be followed.*

**Home Testing**

*At present, HMPPS does not have approval for prison staff to use lateral flow devices (LFD) to test themselves at home before coming to work. They must take the tests at their place of work.*

*The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), is the national body responsible for approving the safe use of testing technologies (incl. LFD) in specific environments.*

*Given the operational challenges of staff LFD testing in prisons, we are working closely with DHSC and doing everything we can to gain the necessary approval from the MHRA for at-home LFD testing. However, until we have secured that approval, all staff must carry out the tests at their place of work. We will provide further updates if this situation changes.*

**Additional dates for Staff LFD training**

We have managed to secure a further 3 days-worth of testing seminars for prison staff who were unable to attend this week.  These are on Monday 1st, Wednesday 3rd and Friday 5th at 1500 hours each day. The joining instructions and the link to use for these additional dates are the same as those provided is in the operational guidance issued on Monday 25th which is attached here for your ease.

