**Prisons in Wales- Isolation Change Outline 28.01.22**

**Following a Positive Test for Covid 19**

As of 28.01.22 and in line with the most recent update to Government guidelines; self-isolation rules changed in Wales for those who are positive for COVID-19**.** This briefing outlines the isolation rules that will apply for staff and prisoners in Wales. The changes are being made bring Wales into line with isolation rules for positive cases in England.

HMPPS will keep these changes under review in consultation with UKHSA and if any risks are identified with these changes, we will communicate any adjustments.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate in line with government guidance. The self-isolation period for positive cases in Wales has shortened from seven to five full days, with the mitigation in place that the individual must return a negative lateral flow test on both Day 5 and Day 6. **The individual should not be showing any COVID-19 symptoms**. This move is irrespective of an individual’s vaccination status or the variant of Covid they are positive with.

**Staff Testing**

**Additional mitigations will also now apply for all staff working in prisons who must also continue to test on days 7, 8, 9 and 10 as below.**

**LFD Tests for staff days 5 and 6**

Staff take an LFD test from day 5 of their isolation period, and another LFD test the following day (day 6). The second LFD test should be taken at least 24 hours after the first. If both LFD tests results are negative, the individual may end their self-isolation and return to work on day 6 after the second negative LFD test result and 5 FULL days of isolation. They should not take an LFD test before the fifth day of their isolation period and should only end their self-isolation following 2 consecutive negative LFD tests which should be taken at least 24 hours apart.

**LFD Tests for staff on days 7, 8, 9 and 10**

As long as they are showing no symptoms of Covid 19 the individual can then return to work but must continue to undertake daily LFD Tests until day 10

Before returning to work staff should follow the below:

* On days the staff member is working, the LFD test should be taken prior to beginning their working day
* If any of the LFD test results during the testing period in days 7, 8, 9 and 10 are positive the staff member must isolate and wait 24 hours before taking the next LFD test
* Between days 5 and 10, two consecutive negative tests are required before the member of staff can attend work (not returning before day 6)
* The member of staff must continue to comply with all relevant infection control precautions and PPE must be worn properly throughout the day
* If the member of staff works with patients who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 (as determined by the organisation), a risk assessment should be undertaken, and consideration given to redeployment for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period
* The likelihood of a positive LFD test in the absence of symptoms after 10 days is very low. If the staff member’s LFD test result is positive on the 10th day, they should continue to take daily LFD tests, and should not return to work until a single negative LFD test result is received

**To Note:**

* This change applies to those currently isolating as well as new cases
* Those who return to work following their period of self-isolation are reminded that social distancing should be optimised and, wherever possible, maintained.
* The RMT programme is not affected by this update as the RMT programme covers **contacts** of positive cases.
* This change is irrespective of an individual’s vaccination status or the variant of Covid they are positive with.
* All staff are expected to continue to participate in the mandatory testing scheme upon their return to work
* Individuals should consider what time they take their tests to release from isolation so that the second test taken 24 hours later can enable them to attend work if scheduled.
* A set of **flow charts** will be provided to help prisons understand which testing model should be applied in each circumstance.

**Prisoner Testing**

Changes to Isolation rules for COVID-19 positive cases in Wales from 28.01.22 also impact prisoners. In line with the most recent update to Government guidelines self-isolation rules have changed for anyone notified by NHS COVID-19 or through LFD testing **as a COVID-19 positive case**.

The self-isolation period for positive cases has moved from seven to five FULL days, with the mitigation in place that the individual must return a negative lateral flow test on both **Day 5** and **Day 6**. These tests should be taken 24 hours apart and must both show a negative result.

This guidance will apply to prisoners/residents who have tested positive and been instructed to isolate. **Once they have completed 5 FULL days of isolation, are asymptomatic and have returned two negative tests, on Day 5 and Day 6 (tests must be 24 hours apart), they will be able to leave isolation.** Isolating individuals must isolate in line with government guidance from Day 1 to Day 5 inclusive.

It is essential that 2 negative rapid lateral flow tests are taken on consecutive days and reported before individuals leave isolation For instance, if an individual is positive on day 5, then a negative test is required on both day 6 and day 7 to release from self-isolation, or positive on day 6, then a negative test is required on days 7 and 8, and so on until the end of day 10.

If the prisoner declines to test at day 5 and 6 to release themselves from isolation then they must complete 10 full days of isolation.

**Reverse Cohorting in Prisons**

The HMPPS Cohorting and Compartmentalisation guidance will be updated in due course to reflect the changes to isolation timeframes. Establishments are asked to be aware that the change to isolation times **does not**impact the RCU period which remains at 14 days as a standard. Where a Reverse Cohorting prisoner has spent **at least 7 days** reverse cohorting **AND** has received **2 negative PCR COVID-19 test results** they will be able to progress from reverse cohorting into standard location prior to the usual 14 days.  The rationale behind this is that public health advice suggests maintaining this period provides best protection from the risk of incursion from the community into our establishments