**Prison Testing Briefing- Change Outline 07.01.22**

## Routine Staff Testing in Prisons

Following the Government announcement on 04.01.22 outlining new critical workforce testing measures, we are working to understand what this means for HMPPS Staff and will provide an update in due course.

## Changes to Confirmatory PCR testing

From 07.01.22 in Wales and 11.01.2022 in England there will be a national temporary suspension on **confirmatory** PCR testing for positive LFD results. This will apply to both staff and prisoners.

This change means that someone reporting a positive LFD test result will not be asked to take a confirmatory PCR test, unless they wish to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment, they have been advised to take a PCR test because they are in a clinically vulnerable group who may need early access to treatment, or they have been advised to do so as part of a research or surveillance programme.

 The planned change:

* Is temporary (i.e. while prevalence remains high) – this will be kept under review by UKHSA
* Does not apply for those wishing to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment
* Does not apply for those advised to take a PCR test because they are in a clinically vulnerable group who may need early access to treatment
* Does not apply to those who have been advised to take a PCR as part of a research or surveillance programme
* This does not affect routine weekly asymptomatic staff PCR testing- this will continue
* This does not affect the initial test required under the testing models for staff contacts of positive cases i.e. DCT, DTCC and RMT
* This does not affect the initial test required under the model for prisoner contacts of a positive case- PRMT
* This does not affect reception testing for prisoners
* PCR tests for symptomatic people should still be taken

## Repeat Testing and Exemptions

**All staff should be aware of the below rules for where testing exemptions no longer apply.**

For **routine testing**, individuals who have had a positive test in last 90 days can undertake LFD tests but should not undertake PCRs.

For **contacts of a positive Covid19 case** (i.e. those who are undertaking DCT, DTCC or RMT Wales) who have tested positive in the last 90 days- should not test using PCR tests through the 90-day period but can test using LFDs. If any LFD is positive, they should isolate.

LFD tests can be used for those **who have tested positive** and want to test with LFD on day 6 and day 7 in order to leave isolation.

## Actions to be taken on results

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| **Result** | **Response** |
| Void | The individual should repeat the test |
| Negative | Those who received negative results can attend work as planned, but they must continue to practice any covid safe measures in place at the time |
| Positive | If an LFD result is POSITIVE the individual must isolate in line with Government guidelines.  If any PCR result is POSITIVE the individual must isolate in line with Government guidelines.  All Positive cases remain under a legal duty to self-isolate regardless of vaccination status or age. |

**Following a Positive Test for Covid 19**

The below outlines a change to self-isolation rules for those who are isolating due to testing positive for Covid 19. In line with the most recent update to Government guidelines; self-isolation rules changed for those who are positive for COVID-19(This has applied in England from 22.12.21 and Wales from 31.12.21).

Staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate in line with government guidance. As advised by UKHSA, the self-isolation period for positive cases has shortened from ten to seven days, with the mitigation in place that the individual must return a negative lateral flow test on both Day 6 and Day 7 of their isolation period. The staff member should not have any COVID-19 symptoms. All staff working in prisons will be able to participate in this testing regime to leave isolation earlier.

**However,** **additional mitigations will also now apply for all staff working in Prisons who should also continue to test on days 8, 9 and 10 as below:**

**LFD Tests for staff days 6 and 7**

Staff take an LFD test from day 6 of their isolation period, and another LFD test the following day (day 7). The second LFD test should be taken at least 24 hours later. If both LFD tests results are negative, they may end their self-isolation and return to work on day 7 after a second negative LFD test result. They should not take an LFD test before the sixth 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 Prison staff on days 8, 9 and 10**

As long as they are showing no symptoms of Covid 19- The individual can then return to work and should continue to undertake daily LFD Tests for the remaining days of the ‘isolation period’ (typically days 8, 9 & 10).

Staff may then return to work if they meet the following criteria:

* If the first LFD test was taken on the seventh day and the second LFD test was taken on the eighth day, they should continue to take LFD tests on day 9 and 10
* On days the staff member is working, the LFD test should be taken prior to beginning their shift
* If any of the LFD test results during the testing period in days 8, 9 and 10 are positive the staff member should isolate and wait 24 hours before taking the next LFD test
* Between days 6 and 10, two consecutive negative tests are required before the member of staff can attend work (not returning before day 7)
* 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 or residents 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:**

* Those who return to work following their period of self-isolation are reminded that social distancing should be optimised and, wherever possible, maintained at all times.
* The RMT (Wales), DTC and DTCC programs are not affected by this update as these programmes cover contacts of positive cases.
* This change is irrespective of an individual’s vaccination status or the variant of Covid they are positive with.
* All HMPPS staff working in prisons are expected to continue to participate in the mandatory testing scheme upon their return to work
* A set of **flow charts** will be provided to help prisons understand which testing model should be applied in each circumstance.