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**Exceptional Social Visits Testing Programme For Prisons**

**Lateral Flow Device Testing (LFD)**

**Operational Guidance**

**Version 1.4**

**Publication Date: 22.04.2022**

# Version Control

Changes within the text will be indicated with **!!**

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| **Date** | **Version** | **Amendment** | **Initials** | **Comments** |
| 22.04.2022 | 1.4 | Guidance created following the stand down of visitor testing/community testing offer | SB/ JS |  |
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# Introduction

From 1st April asymptomatic testing in the wider community will end in England and from 28 March 2022 self-isolation will no longer be a legal requirement in Wales- which impacts social visitors to prisons who, until now, may have been accessing tests for Covid-19 in the community in order to take a test ahead of a social visit.

**The requirement for visitors to test prior to social visits in prisons in England and Wales ceased from 1st April, and it will no longer be necessary for prisoners to be offered a pre-visit test**.

However, Outbreak Control Teams may consider whether to make the recommendation to introduce visits testing for prisoners and visitors as an additional safeguard where appropriate during an outbreak. Test kits will be supplied at the visits centre- visitors will not be expected to provide their own.

This guidance will support prisons in standing this up and advising visitors in advance.

Prisons should contact the [HMPPS Testing Team](mailto:HMPPSTesting@justice.gov.uk) where this decision is being considered or has been taken.

# Initial Actions

Once a decision has been reached the following actions should be carried out as soon as practicable. Further detail is provided in this guidance.

* Notify the HMPPS Testing Team (who will notify the Visits Booking team)
* Prepare Notices to staff, prisoners and visitors
* Prisoners who have upcoming visits advised
* Check stock of LFD – restock via the HMPPS testing team if required.
* Identify staff to support testing
* Prepare the visits centre

# Documentation

The guidance and associated annexes are underpinned by the documents below which are provided by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

## Clinical Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

The clinical SOP provided by DHSC must be used alongside this HMPPS document. This SOP is regularly updated to reflect any changes in policy and procedure. As new iterations are released, the HMPPS Testing team will share these with you and will highlight any changes.

The UKHSA SOP is a joint document which covers the requirements for both Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATS) and Workplace Collect (also known as Self-Collect). The SPOC should ensure they are referring to the correct section according to the selected model.

It is the responsibility of the Prison SPOCto ensure that they are familiar with the content of the most up to date SOP and that they and their team are adhering to the required standards.

## Guidebook

A supporting Guidebook has been provided which works alongside the DHSC SOP. This is also subject to periodic updates.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## The Governor/Director

Governors/Directors are to consult with recognised trade unions and visitors’ centre providers when deciding the best approach for implementing visits testing locally.

Prisons should be aware that OCTs may make the recommendation to stand up visits testing and can commence planning for this eventuality, considering the points covered in this guidance.

A local Single Point of Contact (SPOC) should be appointed by the Governor/Director to support the delivery of the COVID-19 LFD testing of visitors to the prison. This role requires the SPOC to be responsible for organising, agreeing and overseeing the testing arrangements for all visitors and prisoners and ensure this is implemented and communicated effectively.

## The SPOC

The role of the SPOC will be to work with the HMPPS Testing Team to ensure they have everything ready to set up the Visits testing programme. They will need to have full knowledge of the requirements and to keep up to date with and implement any new actions.

IMPORTANT: SPOCs should read through this, and all associated documents to ensure that they are familiar with the process and the required actions. They should be proactive in their approach to seeking clarification from the HMPPS Testing team if there is anything that is unclear.

They will have oversight of the process, ensuring that Infection Prevention Controls are in place and that the programme maintains the Covid Secure environment requirements.

There will be an element of administrative work required, although this is not thought to be extensive - this must be accurate and timely as this will involve reporting on the testing of consenting participants and reporting to the HMPPS Testing team on a weekly basis.

Staff can volunteer locally to be part of the prisoner or visitor testing team and such tasks will be completed within work hours.

## Other roles required

The following roles may be appropriate to consider dependant on the delivery option selected:

* Admin support
* Prisoner Testers
* Test Collection point assistant

## HMPPS Testing Team

The HMPPS Testing Team are the SPOC’s point of contact for any question or queries on Visits testing. They will:

* Support SPOCs as they co-ordinate the programme across their areas
* Communicate any changes as directed by HMPPS, PHE or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
* Maintain documentation and ensure updated versions are made available

## The Visits Testing Approach

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| **Approach** | |
| **Testing** | **Visitor Testing :** Visitors will be offered a self-collect LFD test at the visitors centre. This model involves Self-collect testing (LFD) of visitors at a designated external testing area. The visitor is issued with a test kit to complete and register themselves and show the results to Prison staff.  ***If a visitor declines to take a test, additional mitigation can be put in place such as non-contact visits, social distancing and face coverings, as decided locally. However, entry must not be declined. These mitigations should be decided at the point that visits is being re-introduced, in discussion with health leads and local trade union representatives.*** |
| **Prisoner Testing :** The Prisoner consents to undertake an LFD test either the day before or on the day of the visit. It is further advised that prisoners should be offered a follow up LFD test 5 to 7 days after the visit has taken place. If the result is positive, the prisoner should isolate in line with current guidance. |
| **Results** | If visitor(s) receive a **negative** test result, the visit can go ahead.  If the prisoner testing is also taking place, both the prisoner’s test and the visitor’s test should be **negative** for the visit to proceed.  If visitor(s) receive a **positive** test the visit will not be allowed to take place. |

## IMPORTANT TO NOTE

* **All visitors** aged 12 and older in each party will be asked to participate in testing. Parents/Guardians must give consent for visitors aged between 12-18.
* Testing does not remove the requirement to wear the required personal protective equipment (PPE) i.e. face coverings as required.
* Visitors must await the results of the test prior to entering the establishment. This can take up to 30 minutes to take and process the test and so visitors should be advised to arrive an extra 45 minutes prior to their visit time to allow for the testing process and any queueing.

**The below outlines what action should be taken in response to the test results:**

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| **Result** | | **Prisoner testing- required actions** | | **Visitor testing- required actions** | |
| **Positive** | | * The prisoner will be informed * Local protocols must be followed with the individual isolating. * The prisoner will be allowed to rebook their visit without impacting their visits allocation. The visit will not be recorded as having taken place on NOMIS. * The visitor should be informed of cancelled visit. | | * The visitor will be advised to return home and follow Government instructions at the time for positive cases. They should follow any instructions provided to them in the NHS results communications. * The visit will be cancelled and can be rescheduled via the normal visits booking process. * The prisoner will be informed of cancelled visit. * If the visitor is eligible for assisted visits, their paperwork should still be endorsed as they have attended the establishment. | |
| **Negative** | | * The prisoner will be informed * . | | * The visitor will inform staff of their result and the visit will go ahead. | |
| **Void** | | * The prisoner should be offered another test. | | * The visitor should be offered another test. | |
| **Declined to provide** | | * If a prisoner declines to take a test, additional mitigation can be put in place as recommended by the OCT/assessed locally, including non-contact visits, social distancing and face coverings. However, the visit should not be cancelled | | * If a visitor declines to take a test, additional mitigation can be put in place as recommended by the OCT/assessed locally, including non-contact visits, social distancing and face coverings. However, entry should not be declined. | |

## Evidencing test results

Visitors will be required to provide proof of their negative test result; this could be the email and/or text message received from the NHS from registering the results of the test or a timestamped photo of the test taken on site\*. This should be shown to staff at the visits centre.

\*a photo will be helpful to demonstrate the result of the test if there is some delay to showing proof of the test to staff as the test cartridge cannot be interpreted after a set time and may show a false result .

## Positive Tests

Positive tests from either party will result in a postponed visit and this should be rebooked as soon as possible. Visitors should also be made aware of the option to access alternative methods of communication such as video calls.

# Delivery and Set up

## Resourcing Testing

As part of the overall decision-making process, the Governor/Director should consider available resources to implement testing as visitor testing going forwards should be supported by prison staff, there is no expectation that family services providers will play a role in testing visitors.

With the introduction of visitor testing, it is possible that the testing of prisoners would also be recommended. This can be done using previous approach to LFD testing already in place. Where there has been no previous testing regime to support pre-visits testing, the visits testing guidance will support sites through set up.

Additional resource will be required for set up and maintenance of testing at the visits centre (Staffing, training requirement, testing kits, time). The installation of booths or an appropriate testing area to cope with the capacity of visitors to each visits session will be required.

## Test Kits

If the prison requires additional kits to support visits testing, the testing team will work with the prison to ensure a supply of self-collect LFD tests is provided to the prison via courier from NDC Branston as soon as possible. This should be requested through the HMPPS Testing Team using a test kit request proforma (provided upon request).

The test kits will be provided in boxes of 7 self-collect test kits, but the prison should only issue one test at a time to each visitor and so will not be required to issue a whole box to an individual.  **The boxes of 7 should be split so that one test is issued to one person. This must be done following infection prevention control measure**

## Set up Considerations

The setup of visitor testing will require Governors/Directors to support a testing lead to set up a suitable self- test area either in the visitors centre or a suitable location outside of the prison. This will also mean processes are in place for infection prevention control and waste management. Test results should be registered and reported by the visitor who will then show visits staff evidence of test (date stamped photo or text message or email from registration),

Governors/Directors will need to consider the number of visitors who will need to take a test prior to their visit and put in place measures to test and process visitors in such a way as not to impact upon the length of the visit.

## Communications

It is preferable that visitors are given prior notice that testing will be taking place and so, on notification of the intention to stand up visitor testing the prison must notify [HMPPSTesting@justice.gov.uk](mailto:HMPPSTesting@justice.gov.uk) as soon as they can in order to commence the communications.

To keep visitors to prison informed of the options available to them, nationally approved communications will be sent out through the prison family services website.

The HMPPS testing team have worked with HMPPS communication team to prepare template notices to prisoners, children, families and staff (**Annexes D , E and F)** for prisons to use locally to advise of any introduction of visitor testing. HMPPS communications teams will update the gov.uk website and social media templates and assets (See annexes) have been provided so that prisons can update their Twitter accounts to advise families of the need to test prior to a visit.

Governors/Directors should arrange for booking services to advise visitors who are booking visits of the change and prisoners must also be made aware of the change. Best efforts should be made to ensure those prisoners who are expecting visits imminently are informed of the planned change.

Key lines are provided to the visits booking team who inform visitors about the testing process. For those sites where the prisoner books the visit – they should be informed of the requirement to test and will be asked to pass this information to their visitors.

## Informed Consent

The Participation Information Sheet and Consent forms **(Annexes A and B)** and accompanying privacy notices (**Annexes G and H**) must be issued to visitors and prisoners ahead of a test taking place. These outline the reason for the testing, explains how their information will be used and also provides a consent form that will support the prison in sharing the reason for a cancelled visit with the prisoner or visitor in the event of a positive result.

If a prisoner tests positive, the visit will be postponed and the reason for this communicated to the visitors. The prisoner will have consented to this information being shared with their visitor through this consent process.

## Testing Prisoners

Prisoner testing will follow the same LFD approach to testing that is already being carried out. It will be a **local decision** on how prisoners are identified and offered testing by the prison testing team from the visits list for each session.

If a prisoner declines to take a test, additional mitigation can be put in place as recommended by the OCT/assessed locally, including non-contact visits, social distancing and face coverings. However, the visit should not be cancelled

## Local Operating Procedure (LOP)

**Annex C** provides a useful Aide Memoir of considerations during planning for prisons when writing their local operating procedures.

## Location

Visitor Testing and reporting will take place in a designated area outside of the prison. The most appropriate place for this will be site specific but the prison will be responsible for ensuring the space made available is appropriate for the chosen method for testing and allows for **hygiene measures**, **privacy** and **social distancing between visitors** alongside existing measures.

## Self-Registration

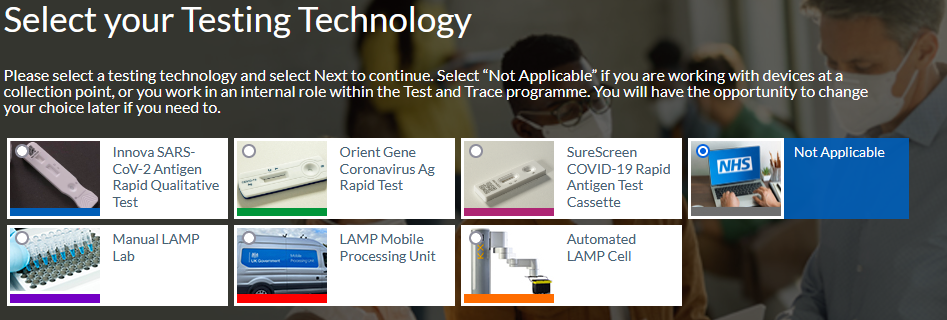
Visitors will be issued with one LFD test per person and the visitor will process and register their own tests from beginning to end. They should show the text message/email received from the registration process to visits staff before proceeding into the visits hall (if negative)

## Training

All staff are required to undergo the required training for their role, complete updates to training when updates are released and retake every three months. The SPOC should be responsible for ensuring that the correct training is completed and repeated as necessary. You can access the online part of the training requirement through the following link.

[**https://go.tessello.co.uk/TestDeviceTraining/**](https://go.tessello.co.uk/TestDeviceTraining/)

Initial registration is via token **3wkcVi4UTX** then you’ll be prompted to set up an individual account and password (which is very quick and easy to do). Once an account is set up, test site staff will be able to access the online training at any time. For those working at the collection point (distributing test kits), they should select ‘not applicable’ and undertake the relevant training in this section.



## Assurance

The SPOC will be responsible for frequent checks to assure that the collection point process and infection prevention control are being followed according to the instructions provided in the DHSC SOP. The Governor/Director must satisfy themselves that the correct procedures are being followed

## Logging and Reporting

**Annex K- Visitors test result log**: only a visual check of visitors results is required, and visits staff will not need to keep a record of who has tested but will need to keep a tally of total numbers of tests taken, declined and positives.

**Annex J - Weekly return**-**:**  is a weekly return log which the SPOC can use to help them to collate the data needed for the weekly Smart Survey requirement).

**Smart Survey reporting** : The testing of visitors must be noted using the Smart survey recording the number of tests offered taken and any positive tests using the existing link. In addition to understanding how many sites are live with visits testing. this also supports the testing team to monitor uptake and usage and inform future stock requirements.

## Ending Visits Testing

Once the Governor/Director has agreed with the OCT that testing is no longer proportionate for visitors, the process may cease. SPOCs will be asked to advise HMPPS Testing team to ensure the supply of tests can be stopped, the HMPPS Testing team will also inform the Communications team of the change so families are informed, and platforms updated

## Support services

Translator services are provided in visitors’ centre (language line) for those that may need support in understanding the instructions.

The visits centre should make a telephone available to those that do not have access to a mobile phone. The visitor should ring 119 for support in registering their test result.

Testing information is available in other languages for Self-Collect at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-antibody-test-kit-guides-in-different-languages>

**See next page for annexes**

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## Annexes

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| **Annex A - LFD Participation Information Sheet and Consent – Visitors** | **Annex G – Privacy Notice for Testing for Visitors** |
| **Annex B - LFD Participation Information Sheet and Consent – People in Custody** | **Annex H – Privacy Notice for Testing for People in Custody** |
| **Annex C – Local Operating Procedure- Key Considerations** | **Annex J- Weekly Reporting Support document** |
| **Annex D- Notice to Families** | **Annex K- Visitors test result log** |
| **Annex E- Notice to Prisoners** | **Social Media Assets** |
| **Annex F- Notice to Staff** |  |
| **Social Media Template**  **Tweet copy – testing at visits**  We have an increase in covid infections & have been advised to bring back visits testing for a short time.  From [X DATE] all visitors aged 12 or over will be strongly encouraged to take a rapid test before each visit. You will be able to do this at the prison for free.  **Tweet copy – testing ending at visits**  The number of covid infections in the prison has lessened and from [X DATE] testing prior to visits will end | |