From Friday 1st April regular COVID testing of people in the wider community will come to an end and people will no longer be able to access testing kits for free. This is part of the Government’s plans to move forward from the pandemic and start to live with COVID.

As a result of this change, from 1st April your friends and family will no longer be required to take a COVID test before coming to see you for a visit, and neither will you.

However, if there is an outbreak at this establishment, or heath experts tell us about a change in risk of infection, we may have to bring back testing before visits for a short time - to protect you, staff and your visitors. If this does happen, we will make sure you and your visitors are told as early as possible, and test kits will be offered at the secure setting.

As the number of COVID infections in the community are still quite high, we need to continue to keep everyone safe during visits with measures such as physical distancing, mask wearing and hand washing.

We will also be encouraging your visitors to still take a test before they come to the establishment if they are able to, as this will help us to minimise the risk of further infections coming in. It will be their choice if they wish to do that.

If any of your visitors take a test and it gives a positive result, we will not be able to let them come in for a visit. This is because we still need to protect your health, and the health of everyone else living and working here.

We will also ask them not to come to the establishment if they have symptoms or have recently been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID.

If a visit does need to be cancelled for any of these reasons, then we will make sure they know how to book a secure video call so that they have another way to see you until they can come and have a visit again. Any visits that can’t take place will be re-booked as soon as it is safe for them to come and visit again.

At the moment staff testing is staying the same, which means staff are being asked to keep taking regular lateral flow tests. I will let you know the longer term plans for testing, and lifting the other restrictions in this secure setting as soon as I can.

Thank you for all your help.