



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO HEADS OF SERVICE

Response by Head of Service:

The Council provides Lateral Flow Test kits for all of our social care staff whose work duties routinely bring them into contact with vulnerable people, so that they can perform regular asymptomatic testing. To date 700 council staff have been given the opportunity to participate in the testing programme.

The test kits are provided to the Council through ordering arrangements established by Welsh Government and are distributed to the staff involved as part of our PPE supply arrangements. The test kits have been made available to eligible staff since Welsh Government initiated the programme for asymptomatic testing of NHS Wales Staff and Social Care staff in January 2021.

Welsh Government guidelines are that performing regular asymptomatic testing is a voluntary decision for the staff concerned, however the Council continues to encourage all eligible staff to participate in the testing programme and to test regularly.

The current requirement is that staff should perform the Lateral Flow Tests twice a week (every 3-4 days). Staff are required to report their test results to the UK Test and Trace programme.

Additionally, other Council staff whose work does not routinely bring them into contact with social care clients as part of their duties are advised to obtain Lateral Flow Tests through the national LFT Collect and LFD Direct arrangements.

The Council is not provided with PCR test kits as part of the national programme for asymptomatic testing of NHS Wales Staff and Social Care staff. Instead, staff who are symptomatic or require a confirmatory PCR test following a positive Lateral Flow Test result, are required to obtain this through the UK Test and Trace arrangements.

The Council worked with Welsh Government to establish arrangements for the provision of Lateral Flow Test kit to other social care providers in Powys to undertake asymptomatic staff testing (care homes, domiciliary care, supported living and childcare settings). Although those services now have their own direct arrangements for ordering tests and performing staff testing, we continue to provide guidance to those services and assist them with stock ordering difficulties or emergency provision of test kits when needed.

While the above information is correct at the time of provision, it is worthy of note that the Welsh Government have today published Together for a safer future: Wales Long-terms Covid-19 transition from pandemic to endemic (gov.wales) which sets out a series of steps for down-scaling Covid-19 measures between now until end of June and beyond.

The plan sets out how Wales's response to coronavirus will change under two core planning scenarios – Covid Stable and Covid Urgent. Of particular interest is that testing will remain in place in social care:

“PCR testing will continue to be available for managing outbreaks alongside lateral flow tests. We will also continue to support organisations working in high-risk settings with clinically vulnerable individuals to access lateral flow tests for regular testing including health boards, adult social care and special schools. We will maintain access to lateral flow tests through our community collect models to support distribution to carers/other vulnerable groups and visitors to care homes.”