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Dear ,

I am writing with an update on two important developments in relation to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Expanded COVID-19 testing for Personal Assistants working in adult social care**

On 15 January 2021 the Scottish Government published guidance on the expansion of COVID-19 testing for staff working across the community-based adult care and support services including personal assistants.

Enclosed with this letter is an information sheet that provides details on:

* how to access lateral flow test kits
* guidance and training staff must complete before completing tests
* where to record test results

**Access to COVID-19 vaccinations for Personal Assistants**

In his letter to independent health and social care frontline workers on 28 January 2021, the Director for COVID-19 Vaccination Delivery, provided further clarity around priority groups eligible for a vaccine.

Those eligible for vaccination are people and workers who provide care closely and regularly to those who are clinically very vulnerable to COVID-19. This includes non-clinical but patient facing staff in secondary or primary care/community healthcare settings, including Personal Assistants.

Front line social care workers are being prioritised for vaccination, as they provide direct and personal care to those most at risk of COVID-19 and its complications. The elderly, those with particular chronic medical conditions which increase their risk from COVID-19, and children with severe neuro-disabilities and complex needs are also high priority.

Taking this into account, I would call on all Personal Assistants to consider their clinical risk eligibility prior to making contact with their local health board for vaccination.

**Booking a vaccination appointment**

If you believe that the Personal Assistants you employ should still receive a COVID-19 vaccine, access to first dose appointments will be made available at the mass vaccination venues for eligible staff who have not yet had a first dose appointment.

If your Personal Assistants meet the eligible criteria and require their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine they can email their name, employer, role and contact telephone number to: loth.massvaccinationstaff@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk. A reply directing individuals to complete an electronic form will be sent which will require a “work” e-mail address.  We understand that the majority of Personal Assistants will not have a “work” e-mail address and in this situation a personal e-mail can be supplied in the field.   Assuming eligibility the completed form will be used to allocate individuals an available appointment at a mass vaccination venue in Lothian.

For those members of staff not currently eligible for vaccination because of their role or the area they work in, they will be vaccinated as part of the mass population programme. The timing of the invitation to be vaccinated will depend on age and whether the person has an underlying health condition.

**Find out more**

As a reminder, more information on those currently eligible for COVID-19 vaccination can be found in the CMO list in the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) Priority Group 2 statement, which defines patient-facing frontline workers:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19---vaccine-letter-from-the-chief-medical-officer-updating-on-the-vaccination-programme---1-january-2021/>

More information on the vaccination programme can be found on NHS Inform: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine>

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Judith Proctor

Chief Officer

**Lateral flow tests**

Asymptomatic testing is being rolled out for the following **adult** social care services:

* those who work as personal assistants
* staff working in adult day centres/day services
* care at home
* sheltered housing/housing with multiple occupancies

Staff testing is not mandatory, but it is encouraged. It is there to protect staff, the people they care for and their families, and adds a layer of protection.

The Scottish Government has published a range of guidance and training materials which can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-at-home-testing-guidance/>

**How to access lateral flow test kits**

Lateral flow test kits can be collected from the PPE Community Hub at the SMART centre, Astley Ainslie Hospital.

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| Email address: | smart.ppe@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk |
| Telephone number: | 07976 840353  |
| Address: | PPE Reception, SMART Centre, Astley Ainslie Hospital, 133 Grange Loan, Edinburgh EH9 2HL |
| Opening times: | Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 4 pm(excluding public holidays) |

Each Personal Assistant should receive one pack, which has 25 lateral flow test devices (equal to 12 weeks’ worth of tests) which are to be carried out twice per week in the Personal Assistant’s home.

The PPE Community Hub will record your details when you collect the test kits (including your Scottish Social Services Council [SSSC] Registration Number where you have one) along with a record of your name as the employer.

It is recommended that you contact the hub before collecting to check that there are enough packs in stock.

**Guidance and training**

Ahead of carrying it the lateral flow tests, it’s essential that you fully read the LFD Care at home staff testing guidance (NES) available on the Scottish Government website and that watch the training video prior to carrying out the first test.

The training materials and video are available here:

[https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/42569/covid-19-diagnostic-swabbing-for-health-and-social-care-staff/assisting-care-at-home-staff-to-self-test-for-covid-19-using-a-lateral-flow-device-lfd#](https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/42569/covid-19-diagnostic-swabbing-for-health-and-social-care-staff/assisting-care-at-home-staff-to-self-test-for-covid-19-using-a-lateral-flow-device-lfd)

**Reporting Results**

Once the lateral flow test has been completed, whether positive or negative, test results should be recorded using the COVID-19 testing and registration portal:

<https://nhsnss.service-now.com/covidtesting>

If you, or another individual, test positive, you should self-isolate immediately and arrange for a confirmatory PCR test by contacting Test and Protect.

Tests can be accessed from GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) or by calling 0300 303 2713

If you receive a negative result, it’s important to still remain vigilant to the development of symptoms that could be due to COVID-19 and continue to follow existing Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures, including the appropriate use of PPE.