

Lancashire Resilience Forum Adult Social Care Cell

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Upper Tier Council and NHS Policy Statement on Testing Residents for Covid-19

20 May 2020

In light of the current Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic, the Three Upper Tier Councils and NHS within the Lancashire Resilience Forum Adult Social Care Cell (LRF) have produced the following policy statement in relation to COVID-19 testing to all care home settings in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.

Protecting care homes that are currently free of Covid-19 is a vital part of managing the Coronavirus outbreak. The continued attention to ensuring high standards of infection prevention – especially hand and respiratory hygiene, the correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and maintaining environmental cleanliness – will help support this ambition. In addition, a structured programme of testing for all care home staff and residents will identify any asymptomatic carriers so those cases can be managed in the right way. A combination of both regular swabbing of staff and patients and robust infection prevention and control procedures will support care homes to reduce the risk of Covid-19 in these settings.

The process will therefore depend on the Covid-19 status within each care home:

1. *Cold Care Home sites (where there is no current outbreak):* A "prevent and protect" model will be in place. Care home staff and residents should be tested and supported with robust PPE precautions and high standards of infection, prevention and control. Strict measures should be implemented on social distancing, self-isolation and visits.
2. *Hot Care Home sites (where there is a known outbreak - two or more residents):* A "protect, contain and support" model will be in place. Staff and residents should be tested and supported with robust PPE precautions and high standards of infection, prevention and control. Isolation wings or sections should be introduced, where possible, within the care home and consideration could be given to quarantining the entire facility with staff remaining on site for extended periods.
3. *Discharge into alternative care arrangements (for residents recovering from Covid-19):* A recovery and rapid reablement model will be in place to support recovering patients to return to the care home from other settings such as an Acute Hospital. Testing for individuals will be conducted prior to discharge back to the home. All residents must be treated as Covid positive until test results are

obtained. All care home staff must also be tested and supported with robust PPE precautions and high standards of infection, prevention and control. Strict measures will be implemented on social distancing, self-isolation and visits.

Footfall within care homes should be minimised to reduce the risk of Covid-19 entering the home. We respect individuals' rights and will ensure service users have the capacity to decide if they wish to have a test, equally if service users lack capacity safeguarding measures will be in place to ensure any test is conducted in their Best Interests.

In relation to Mental Capacity Act and testing individuals who are lacking capacity it should be acknowledged:

A Mental Capacity assessment should be completed for any person where capacity is questionable specifically around the decision to consent to a Covid-19 swab test.

For those who lack capacity or likely to be non-compliant with the swab testing process a best interest assessment must occur which would include input from family, friends and professionals involved in the person's care.

There are NO statutory easements to the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and DoLS and therefore any unresolved decisions would have to be heard by the Magistrates or the High Court.

The three Upper Tier Councils and Lancashire Resilience Forum wishes to thank all care providers in Lancashire, and care home providers in particular, for the hard work, diligence, resilience and above all else, care and compassion that they continue to show for their residents and staff. The LRF appreciates the lasting impact of this pandemic on residents and staff and will continue to provide as much support as possible in a respectful, pragmatic and proportionate way.