

URGENT UPDATE RE STAFF AND RESIDENT COVID-19 TESTING

Dear Provider

Please find attached letter from DHSC which sets out a new national testing strategy which came into effect yesterday 6 July 2020. The revised strategy includes the offer of a regular weekly re-testing programme for staff and every 28 days for residents which is very much welcomed by the Council. I am sure most of you will have seen the recent media regarding Bradford's high level of infection rate, and against this backdrop the Council have agreed that the national processes for this are the primary route for managing this testing arrangement, rather than continuing to use the Marley Fields test centre. Through compliance with the national framework we have full visibility of testing arrangements across all our care homes rather than relying on multiple data sets which will enable a more effective response to tackling the virus and keeping all our homes safe.

The strategy includes a new approach to management of an outbreak and now offers "whole home testing" through our local Health Protection Team who will now be able to order bulk tests on your behalf and the remainder of the strategy confirms the process for care homes with no positive cases as part of a longer term and systematic approach to testing.

The first step that you need to take **immediately** is to register for care home re-testing on the national portal using the link provided in the attached letter. Make sure that you receive confirmation that your care home has been accepted for re-testing and that your request is being processed. If you have any issues with registering on the national portal then you should contact the coronavirus testing contact centre on 0300 303 2713 which is open from 7:00 am to 23:00 pm every day.

If you have escalated your concerns and are still not able to register for re-testing or you are experiencing any other issues through using the national process then please let us know by speaking directly your nominated care home liaison officer. Where there are issues impacting on your ability to obtain tests via the national portal, the Council will support you with arranging testing via Marley Test Centre on a case by case until your issue is fully resolved and via escalation from the care home liaison officers. It is important that you share your concerns and issues with us so that we can ensure these are also raised at the relevant national forums via our Strategic Director to support improvements at a national level.

To support a smooth transition to new arrangements, if you have already booked your tests via Marley Fields Test centre for this week (6 July to 12 July) then you will still be able to collect these as agreed with central testing team whilst you are registering for the re-testing and awaiting delivery of your kits.

If you have booked testing kits for week commencing 13 July onwards then you will receive a call from the Council's central testing team prior to your confirmed date for collection to check your progress with obtaining tests via the national portal arrangements. If you do receive confirmation of a delivery date from the national portal and already have a booking in place at Marley Test Centre and no longer need these tests and have not already been contacted by the team then please notify

them at COVID19.stafftesting@bradford.gov.uk to confirm that your tests are no longer required.