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### **To all staff in early learning and childcare and school-age childcare settings**

This message follows the earlier message to you on 19 February and is primarily for staff in settings which are part of phase two of the asymptomatic lateral flow device testing programme.

Phase two covers all standalone Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and School-aged Childcare (SAC) settings registered with the Care Inspectorate which are not attached to schools. All such day care of children settings are in scope whether private, voluntary, independent or local authority operated and regardless of whether you are a provider of funded ELC or not.

Staff who are part of settings which were included in phase one given their attachment to schools will already have an offer of at home testing kits available to them.

### **ROUTINE ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING FOR STAFF**

We want to update you on progress in rolling out the asymptomatic LFD at home testing programme. There have been other communications with providers and with local authorities which may also have been shared with you for information, and we are grateful to them for their cooperation to date in enabling the programme to progress.

We are currently making available a suite of documentation to all settings to support their delivery of the offer of testing, and to help them support you in making a decision to participate in the programme.

In the coming weeks you should receive from your setting information about the testing which is being offered, and about what the setting's responsibilities will be as well as the responsibilities of staff who participate in the testing.

Staff who work in multiple settings will be able to participate in the programme, and should only do so through one of your settings. You may wish however to inform other setting in which you work that you are participating in the testing programme.

Testing is voluntary. However, we are encouraging all settings and staff to participate in the programme when test kits are available for the wellbeing of their setting community.

## **When will testing be available?**

Deliveries will commence from the week of the 22 March 2021, deliveries will be spread across the days of the week and we will have a confirmed delivery schedule for settings at the end of the week before deliveries are made.

We understand that it is disappointing that this has not happened earlier. We have worked as fast as possible to achieve the roll out of this phase, and had hoped that deliveries may have been possible slightly earlier.

We want to reassure you that the safety of children and childcare staff remains our priority, and the evidence continues to show that childcare settings are low risk environments.

However, we do understand the importance of offering staff and families as much reassurance as possible. Therefore, alongside the safety measures and mitigations you are following within your settings, this asymptomatic lateral flow device (LFD or LFT) testing programme will be an important part of ensuring settings remain as safe as possible.

## **Access to asymptomatic PCR testing**

We are working to make the at home asymptomatic testing available as soon as possible and in the meantime you remain able to access an on demand asymptomatic PCR test through the NHS portal. All staff in childcare settings have now direct access to this form of testing on demand, you no longer need to seek a referral through your employer.

Essential education and childcare staff without symptoms may now access testing through the normal citizen booking portal at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test).

They should click on the “*Start now*” button under “*Get a free test online*”, where they will then be presented with the question, “*Is this person who needs a test an essential worker?*”

They should select yes and proceed with the subsequent steps.

When they reach the step asking “*Why are you asking for a test?*”, they should select the option, “*I’m in Scotland or Wales and I work in health or social care, education or in an emergency or prison service*”, and continue with the following steps.

Should you have any queries which cannot be answered by your setting manager through access to the supporting documentation, you can e-mail us at the childcare testing programme via the following link: [Childcare Testing Programme](#)