

Cedar Court
Guildford Road
Leatherhead
Surrey
KT22 9AE

29 April 2020

Re: Swab Testing for Care Homes

Dear Colleague,

As you will be aware, there has been a significant focus on COVID-19 swab testing in line with national guidance. This has been developing and progressing swiftly at a local level and it has been challenging to digest and develop processes and capacity to meet demand in a timely and efficient way.

In response to the guidance and the requirement to expand the testing capability quickly, a core group of system partners from Health and Care Partners has been set up to co-ordinate this function. Clearly there is an expectation to deliver the service to all that are eligible. The team is working hard to review and target priority areas first, with a view on using all the options available to build resource to meet the need.

The attached media statement has been released today and outlines our current local position. However, I wanted to contact you directly today on the back of the Secretary of State, Matt Hancock's announcement to confirm that we are meeting requirements. This is being done through the Public Health England (PHE) cohort testing of symptomatic vulnerable people, and some through staff accessing local testing sites. We are aware that this approach needs to be urgently stepped up and will be contacting you over the coming days to outline our plan for achieving this target.

The safety of residents and staff is a priority and as such, testing will now also be provided to all potential care home residents before they are discharged from hospital. This will provide reassurance and peace of mind to residents and family members, and will help care providers to take appropriate action to ensure that social care workers and other residents are safe, including implementing isolation procedures for those who test positive.

I hope that you will work with us, and support us to manage this situation and in the meantime, if you have any specific comments or queries, please do forward them to syheartlandscg.stafftesting@nhs.net

Many thanks in advance for your patience and your support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare Stone', written in a cursive style.

Clare Stone

Director of Quality at Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership and the Strategic Lead for Covid-19 Testing in Surrey