

18th February 2021

Twice Weekly Lateral Flow Testing (LFD) TESTING for patient-facing healthcare workers

As per the recent announcements from the Primary, Social care and Community Health leads, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulation Agency (MHRA) has confirmed that LFDs can be used as a routine self-test for patient-facing practice teams. In addition to those of us in Community Eyecare, this expanded provision will now include patient-facing staff in all primary care and other health professionals, ambulance service staff and NHS24 teams.

The rollout will commence imminently via the existing distribution systems deployed in the supply of PPE to practice premises. We advise that [detailed guidance](#) is examined along with the [FAQs](#).

Regarding the use of the proposed implementation of the testing regime, OS is fully supportive of this initiative and of the guidance enclosed within the accompanying letter;

“The testing of staff is offered on a voluntary basis. However, we would strongly encourage all eligible staff to undertake the testing on a routine basis, highlighting the benefits to them, their families and their patients.”

“expanding routine testing provides an additional layer of protection to staff, their colleagues, their patients and clients, and will identify a proportion of asymptomatic infections which would otherwise not be detected and allow earlier identification of some pre-symptomatic infections.”

“Contractors who wish to opt-out of the testing programme can do so by contacting NHS National Services Scotland at nss.PrimaryCareLFDOptout@nhs.scot by 22 February 2021 at 1700hrs. We expect that Contractors will consult with their staff before making a decision to opt out.”

Much as there may be some disruption to staffing levels as a result of work colleagues testing positive and awaiting the outcome of a confirmatory (PCR) test, current higher transmission levels amongst healthcare teams suggest that an effective regular testing programme could result in significant suppression of the virus.

Adoption of the scheme is voluntary and practices must opt out if they do not wish to be supplied. We would expect that practice owners and managers consult with their teams and only opt out entirely if **ALL** colleagues decide not to participate.

Whilst the scheme is voluntary for individuals, Optometry Scotland encourages practices to engage and fully supports the extension of the testing programme with practice team colleagues who are willing to be tested to actively take part in the LFD testing scheme.

With best regards,

David Quigley
Optometry Scotland Chair