

Chief Nursing Officer Directorate
Fiona McQueen, Chief Nursing Officer
Chief Medical Officer Directorate
Dr Gregor Smith, Interim Chief Medical Officer
Directorate of Primary Care
Tom Ferris, Chief Dental Officer



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

To:

Professor Fiona Coutts
Convenor of the Council of Deans of Health Scotland

Professor Andrea Nolan
Convenor Universities Scotland

Professor Pete Mathieson
Universities Scotland, Lead Member for Health

15 July 2020

Dear colleagues,

The Chief Nursing Officer wrote to all NHS Boards on 29 June to inform them about new guidance on the testing of asymptomatic healthcare workers involved in suspected nosocomial COVID-19 outbreaks, which was recommended by the COVID-19 Nosocomial Review Group. This guidance is due to be published on the Scottish Government website this week and a Frequently Asked Questions document will also supplement this guidance.

We will also test, on a weekly basis, staff working in specialist cancer units, in long term care of the elderly and in long stay mental health wards. These further categories were selected either by having regard to evidence of nosocomial spread in certain healthcare settings, and/or by having a likelihood of highly vulnerable patients in terms of COVID-19. Both the Operational Definitions in terms of this policy and a Guide to Testing Healthcare Workers are due to be published this week on the Scottish Government website and we will share these once they become available.

This guidance will also apply to students undertaking placements in these particular clinical areas.

Please note that, in line with existing guidance, staff in care homes are also tested on a weekly basis and this therefore also applies to any students undertaking placements in care homes.

Testing is for a legitimate purpose, and employers will request that students in designated areas or, where an outbreak is happening, participate in this.

Employers will of course consider reasons given by students who choose not to participate, but employers are responding to their underlying obligations to deliver a safe and effective service for patients and to comply with their own health and safety obligations. Where students have a legitimate reason for not participating, alternatives will be considered in line with existing workforce policy DL (2020) 1, which can be accessed at the following link: [https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL\(2020\)01.pdf](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2020)01.pdf).

In addition we are also pleased to advise that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport has agreed to offer temporary COVID-19 linked death in service cover to students undertaking clinical placements in NHS Scotland. A one off payment of £60,000 will be made to the next of kin of any student who dies where COVID-19 is a documented factor, while undertaking NHS clinical placements.

I would be very grateful if you can share this letter with your respective members and other colleagues who will wish to know about this policy in terms of its inclusion of clinical students of all disciplines.

Please note that we are keeping the guidance under review and would encourage you to get in touch with any further questions. For any questions relating to healthcare worker testing, please contact TestandProtectQueries@gov.scot. For any questions relating to temporary COVID-19 linked death in service cover, please contact Daniel.MacDonald@gov.scot.

Kind regards,



PROFESSOR FIONA MCQUEEN
Chief Nursing Officer



TOM FERRIS
Chief Dental Officer

DR NICOLA STEEDMAN
Deputy Chief Medical Officer

pp.



DR GREGOR SMITH
Interim Chief Medical Officer for Scotland