

Weekly Bulletin - Week beginning 11/1/21

Updates

Cohorting Staff – This is recommended in care homes. Cohorting means that the same staff work together in teams and work with the same residents/ in the same units/areas. This approach prevents spread beyond any area with infection.

Staff Rooms- when cohorting staff, best practice is for different cohorts to have different staff rooms to keep staff truly separate. Provide hand gel, masks and equipment to clean down and disinfect surfaces in staff rooms so that staff have access to clean masks after their breaks, and can clean the area before next use.

Cleaning and disinfecting- reminded that all high touch surfaces should be cleaned with general purpose detergent and then disinfected. The solution for disinfection should be 1000 parts per million available chlorine - no other concentration is suitable. Guidance states that a combined product for cleaning and disinfecting may be used if available, as long as it contains 1000 parts per million available chlorine. Disinfectant wipes are acceptable for use between uses on staff desks, phones, keyboards, kettles and other surfaces and items used by staff.

Night Staff - ensure night staff are following the same IPC guidelines as all other staff. Need to ensure all staff are trained in IP&C - hand washing, masks, social distancing etc. Managers should make sure that **ALL** care staff on the premises are adhering to enhanced precautions – supervise staff practice

Masks- Masks and all PPE should be doffed after being in a room with a resident with confirmed or suspected COVID, after carrying out personal care for **any** resident and, if the mask is touched or becomes wet. Sessional masks can be worn when not giving direct personal care for example, dispensing medications. See update guidelines care homes 31/12/2020, points 4 & 5 and new National IPC manual addendum –

https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2980/documents/1_covid-19-information-and-guidance-for-care-homes.pdf

<http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/scottish-covid-19-community-health-and-care-settings-infection-prevention-and-control-addendum/>

Visors- Should only be worn when carrying out care for residents with detected COVID or COVID symptoms. These should preferably be single use, if they are reusable they should be cleaned after every use according to manufacturer's instructions and stored appropriately to avoid contamination. Doffing visors: Remove visor and put in bin or in container for cleaning. Wash or gel hands, then remove mask.

Visors are recommended when performing care where there is a risk of splashing to the face, such as cleaning residents' teeth.

Staff with symptoms- staff with symptoms, or their family members should always be tested through the NHS Grampian COVID testing website –

covid19.nhsgrampian.org - NOT through 111 or by using swabs supplied to the care home for asymptomatic staff or resident testing.

Staff member must be completely well before returning to work, even if this is after the 10 days isolation period.

It is important to check with all staff before they come on duty that they are well and have no symptoms of COVID, and that their family members are well and symptom free. This can be done verbally, or by using a written check list- some homes use the check list that is used for their visitors risk assessments.

Lateral flow test –Tests are designed for asymptomatic testing and is not an accurate test for any one with symptoms- do not use for staff, relatives or residents with symptoms. There is no requirement for a staff member to have a test carried out pre shift, this is a work based precautionary activity therefore may be carried out at any time during the shift. If a staff member becomes symptomatic after a negative LFT they should isolate and get a PCR test through **covid19.nhsgrampian.org**

Disposing of LFT waste- awaiting national guidance.

Self Swabbing- Please ensure that if staff are self swabbing, they carry this out correctly so they will get an accurate result- it has been found that many people's technique is poor, so those with COVID may be missed.

Staff or residents who have tested detected for COVID 19- should not be included in **asymptomatic** testing for 90 days following a detected test. However, if the staff member or resident **develops symptoms** they should get a test.

Care homes who do not attend the weekly huddle meeting with Health Protection will not be given a call back by HPT as of Monday 11th January 2020 unless there are issues within the care home such as symptomatic residents or staff.

Aprons –storing and taking aprons out of flat packs can cause risks of contamination. Discuss with your suppliers preferable role dispensers.

Test results- The Health Protection Team will only give out results for symptomatic residents or mass testing due to a situation within the care home- please call between 9-5. All other results- eg staff results or asymptomatic routine mass testing will be communicated via the NHSG testing team. Testing team can be contacted on **01224 558494**.

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