|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| PHAlogo**BY EMAIL** | *Office of the Director of Public Health* *Public Health Agency**4th Floor South**12-22 Linenhall StreetBELFAST* *BT2 8BS**Tel: 0300 555 0114**Website:* [*www.publichealth.hscni.net*](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net) |

Date 22 April 2022

Dear Client

**UPDATED ASYMPTOMATIC COVID-19 TESTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS FROM MONDAY 25 APRIL 2022**

We would be grateful if you would ensure that your Personal Assistant(s) is given a copy of this letter.

On the 24 March 2022, the Department of Health published the COVID-19 Test, Trace and Protect Transition Plan. The Transition Plan sets out a more targeted approach to testing, with a focus on supporting those at highest risk of serious illness. The Plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/Test-Trace-Transition-Plan.pdf>

The Plan explains that changes will be introduced on a phased basis from 22 April 2022, with further planned changes taking place during a period of transition through to a steady state for testing from the end of June 2022 onwards.

The purpose of this letter is to advise that **no changes are currently planned** to the advised Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing arrangements for asymptomatic Personal Assistants (that is for those with no symptoms) in Northern Ireland.

All Personal Assistants, who are not already part of an existing regular COVID-19 testing programme at work, will be able to continue to access LFD testing as before.

LFD tests can be ordered on-line for delivery to the Personal Assistant’s home

or Alternatively, Personal Assistants will be able to collect LFD test kits from participating community pharmacies across Northern Ireland. People should not use the pharmacy service to collect lateral flow tests if they have symptoms of COVID-19

Links to on line ordering of LFD tests and information on participating community pharmacies are available at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-testing>

The current advice is that all asymptomatic Personal Assistants to continue to conduct self-testing LFD tests on a twice weekly basis in their own home, prior to attending their place of work.

Testing recommendations for asymptomatic Personal Assistants in Northern Ireland will continue to be kept under regular review.

If you have any queries in relation to the content of this communication please contact Trudy.Brown@hscni.net or Wendy.Thornton@hscni.net.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely

 

**Dr Brid Farrell**

**Deputy Director of Public Health**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| cc |  |  |  |
| **SPPG Chief Executive****HSC Trust Chief Executives** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |