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11 May 2021

## **To all General Ophthalmic Services Contractors**

Dear Colleague,

### **LATERAL FLOW TESTING FOR ASYMPTOMATIC PATIENT-FACING PRIMARY CARE STAFF**

Under the direction of Public Health Agency (PHA), HSC is pleased to make available an ongoing supply of COVID-19 Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) for primary care staff, including health service, mixed, and fully private dental practice staff.

The DoH, PHA and the HSCB have endorsed the use of LFTs as a useful tool which health care workers find reassuring and one which offers a beneficial adjunct to protect your teams in the fight against COVID-19 and will be used as agreed with MHRA.

This type of testing aims to find asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 by testing patient facing staff twice a week with staff self-testing at home before work and uploading results to a digital platform (<https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>) in the same way as staff and pupils in educational settings.

Further information and Frequently Asked Questions for primary care staff are available at <http://www.pha.site/LFDtestFAQs> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/instructions-for-covid-19-self-test>

Your practice information has been forwarded to the SALESFORCE ordering system who will contact you directly in the coming days to complete your registration and to allow you to order tests for your staff. SALESFORCE will contact you via your HSCNI email account.

1. You should expect to receive an initial email on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May, providing your practice with a Unique Organisation Number (UON) which you will need to register onto the portal and set up a log in and place orders.
2. Following registration and placement of the first order, practices can expect to receive/take delivery of their first batch of tests approx. 7 days later
3. Practices will then be able to place subsequent orders every 21 days should they require to do so (Some practices may decide they have enough stock and not require to place additional orders until they reach the 6-week ark which is acceptable. The 21 days is the minimum timeframe for them to place orders).

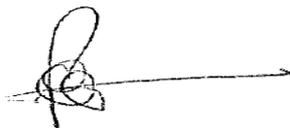
If you have difficulty accessing your HSCNI email account then please contact [ebusiness@hscni.net](mailto:ebusiness@hscni.net)

Whilst not mandatory, it is hoped you will value the use of these tests as a tool in reducing community transmission of the virus and in reducing the possible impact of the virus on your staff and on the working of your own practice. This is particularly important in light of the risk of a further surge as restrictions are eased and that we now know that up to a third of those infected with COVID-19 display no symptoms but are infectious.

As such, it is hoped that you will encourage uptake within your staff teams.

Thank you again for all your ongoing work in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Raymond Curran', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Raymond Curran**  
**Head of Ophthalmic Services**