

## Mary Nergaard

---

**Subject:** FW: OFFICIAL: Care home testing - PHE HPT arrangements - request from Newcastle lab

**Importance:** High

**From:** Jemma Hurrell <Jemma.Hurrell@northtyneside.gov.uk>

**Sent:** 21 April 2020 10:23

**Subject:** FW: OFFICIAL: Care home testing - PHE HPT arrangements - request from Newcastle lab

**Importance:** High

Dear Care Home Managers

Please see emails below about care home swabbing process (bottom email) and a request from PHE not to call the lab for results as they are inundated.

Many thanks

Jemma

### Jemma Hurrell

Commissioning Manager, People Based Commissioning Team

Quadrant East, Cobalt Business Park, The Silverlink North, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY

[North Tyneside Council](#)

**Tel:** I am currently working from home, please contact me by email and I can arrange to ring you if required

[jemma.hurrell@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:jemma.hurrell@northtyneside.gov.uk)

[www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk)



Please note I do not work on a Friday

---

**From:** ICC.NorthEast [<mailto:ICC.NorthEast@phe.gov.uk>]

**Sent:** 17 April 2020 17:13

**Subject:** RE: OFFICIAL: Care home testing - PHE HPT arrangements - request from Newcastle lab

### OFFICIAL

Dear All

We've had a call from Newcastle lab (who process the swabs that HPT arrange for care homes) – they are being inundated with calls from care homes requesting results, which is severely hampering their ability to get on and process things.

Please can you make sure that any communications you are sending to homes make it clear that results will be phoned to them by the HPT (for the swabs that we send out) – and if you have local arrangements in place already that you have arrangements in place for handling results. Please ask homes **not to phone the lab** for results – as this will just slow things up.

Thanks

Kirsty

---

**From:** ICC.NorthEast  
**Sent:** 17 April 2020 15:53  
**Subject:** OFFICIAL: Care home testing - PHE HPT arrangements

**OFFICIAL**

Dear All

**Clarification on HPT arrangements for swabbing care home residents**

I thought it would be helpful to clarify the HPT arrangements for swabbing care home residents with symptoms of COVID.

- When contacted by a care home about COVID, the HPT will send swabs to the home.
- We will send enough swabs for the residents who are symptomatic at the time of initial report
- The home staff collect swabs – we are recommending that they collect nasal swabs only (rather than nose and throat) due to concerns about the ability (staff and equipment) to collect a throat swab safely
- Once swabs are collected, they are returned to the lab at Newcastle in pre-paid postal packs
- Results from the home are sent to the HPT – a member of the team contacts the home to report results and asks the home to update the GP of the resident
- As you will understand, there has been a considerable increase in the demand for swabs from care homes since the announcement – we are currently experiencing shortage of swabs and postal packs, so are managing the demand as best we can. If homes report large numbers of residents with symptoms we may not be able to provide swabs for them all immediately.

We will continue to send swabs out as above, **but will not be providing swabs for any subsequent residents who develop symptoms** - I understand that there are local and regional discussions underway to agree processes for swabbing these residents and reporting results to the home and resident's GP.

An important point to note

- Since the transmission in communities escalated a few weeks ago, we have been advising care homes to manage anyone with symptoms 'as if they have COVID' regardless of the result of swab.  
This advice still stands – and the results of any swabbing should not change the clinical and public health actions in the home - i.e. anyone with symptoms should be isolated for 14 days and staff should be using PPE for all care (Table 4 in the IPC guidance – sustained transmission)

Best wishes

Kirsty

**Dr Kirsty Foster**  
**PHE North East ICC**

\*\*\*\*\*

The information contained in the EMail and any attachments is confidential and intended solely and for the attention and use of the named addressee(s). It may not be disclosed to any other person without the express authority of Public Health England, or the intended recipient, or both. If you are not the intended recipient, you must not disclose, copy, distribute or retain this message or any part of it. This footnote also confirms that this EMail has been swept for computer viruses by Symantec.Cloud, but please re-sweep any attachments before opening or saving. <http://www.gov.uk/PHE>

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

This message may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient please inform the sender that you have received the message in error before deleting it. Please do not disclose, copy or distribute information in this e-mail or take any action in relation to its contents. To do so is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. Thank you for your co-operation.

NHSmial is the secure email and directory service available for all NHS staff in England and Scotland. NHSmial is approved for exchanging patient data and other sensitive information with NHSmial and other accredited email services.

For more information and to find out how you can switch,  
<https://portal.nhs.net/help/joiningnhsmial>