



Letter to visitors: lateral flow device (LFD) roll-out to hospices

Dear visitor,

As you will be aware, cases of Covid-19 are once again sadly increasing and the government is focused on ensuring regular testing of visitors to health and care facilities. NHS Test and Trace has been in touch with us to ask that we begin to offer Lateral Flow testing for visitors to the Inpatient Unit at Arthur Rank Hospice Charity. Regular testing of visitors can help to support safer visits with loved ones, only when **combined** with other infection prevention and control (IPC) measures (including screening of visitors - you must not visit if you have any symptoms of Covid 19, social distancing, washing hands regularly and the use of personal protective equipment).

Testing can support our Inpatient Unit to safely maintain a balance between infection control and the vital benefits of visiting to the health and wellbeing of patients and loved ones. It is important to stress that testing visitors does not remove the risk of spreading the coronavirus, the test result indicates whether or not you have the infection at the point the test is taken. The Lateral Flow test which provides results within 30 minutes is not a substitute for the other measures above which must also be adhered to at all times by everyone. Neither does the Lateral Flow test provide the same level of accuracy as the PCR test that you will be offered if you have Covid 19 symptoms and are asked to attend a test site. This test will also be offered if your Lateral Flow test result is positive.

The best way to limit spread of the virus is to limit contact with other people. Whilst we understand the importance of visiting your loved one at this time, we also ask that you consider carefully how many of your family or friendship network should visit and how frequently.

Our Inpatient Unit will start testing visitors from **7 January 2021**.

We ask that from this date you allow an additional 45 minutes to your planned visit time to complete the test. If you have a mobile phone, please ring the unit on 01223 675900 when you arrive at the hospice and a colleague will take your name, ask how many tests are required and ask you to head to the main entrance where you will be greeted by a test operative in a high visibility vest.

The swabbing, which you will be asked to do yourself, will be completed in the hair salon in the main entrance which has been repurposed. Once the swab has been completed and handed to the operative for processing, we kindly ask that you return to your car to await the test result. The swab needs to be tested for exactly 30 minutes during which time you are asked to remain in your

car, so we suggest bringing a flask of hot drink and a blanket if it is cold. If you arrive by public transport or cycle you will be shown to the designated waiting area. Our colleague will talk you through the process including asking you to sign a consent form before beginning.

Please read the visitor testing guidance pack which can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942016/lfid-visitor-testing-guidance-pack-12-2020.pdf carefully before scheduling a visit so that you know what to expect before, during and after your visit. Please note that this guidance pack was produced to support visiting in care homes, we have since been advised by DHSC to use this guidance to support testing in our hospice so we apologise on behalf of DHSC that some of the language will not be appropriate or terminology that Arthur Rank Hospice Charity uses. We hope you'll agree with us that the 45-minute testing process is a minor inconvenience to support us in managing the risks of coronavirus, and the chance to have continued contact with your loved one. If you need a hard copy of this pack, please let a colleague know and we will print a copy for you.

Do I have to be tested to visit my loved one?

Testing is important to help identify people who might be carrying coronavirus but not showing symptoms. Testing may not identify everyone that is currently infectious, you will have heard on the news that false negative results are happening at a high rate. This is why we are stressing the importance of the test being only one measure alongside other infection prevention and control measures and wearing PPE to do all we can together to keep our Inpatient Unit and your loved ones safe.

If you do not want to take a test, please do discuss this with our Ward manager. In this case we will have to discuss whether we can allow you to continue to visit based on a risk assessment.

If you have any further questions or queries about visiting loved ones at the hospice, please contact the Ward manager.

Thank you in advance for your patience and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Sharon Allen

Chief Executive