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To all registered childcare providers and childminders**Test and Protect transition plan**

The Scottish Government today published its Test and Protect Transition Plan, details of which were provided by the First Minister to Parliament.

The Transition Plan set out the timelines for moving away from population-wide testing aimed at reducing transmission, towards a more targeted approach to testing. It set out a new strategic intent for Test and Protect, which is:

*To adapt Test & Protect to support the effective management of Covid-19 as it becomes endemic, to support patient treatment and care; protect those in highest risk settings; monitor prevalence and the risk of new variants, respond to outbreaks, scale if required for future health threats, and build a legacy for wider population health benefit.*

As part of the transition plan, **the schools asymptomatic testing programme will end at the end of this term (for ELC settings which do not operate to school term dates, the final date for testing will be 17th April)**. Schools and ELC settings should distribute their remaining stock by 17<sup>th</sup> April. In the new term (from 18<sup>th</sup> April) staff and secondary pupils in mainstream and special schools will no longer be advised to test twice weekly, and schools/ELC settings will no longer have the facility to order LFD test kits via the schools/ELC testing programme pathway.

This decision has been informed by expert advice provided by the National Incident Management Team, Public Health Scotland, senior clinicians and the Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues. At the current time, the population has much stronger protection against COVID-19 than at any other point in the pandemic, due to the vaccination programme and the development of natural immunity to the infection. Severe health outcomes are now far less likely to arise due to this protection, availability of and access to antiviral treatments, and increased scientific and public understanding about how to manage risk.

The wider Test and Protect Transition Plan will also see regular testing end in other low-risk workplaces, and the universal testing programme will cease operation on the same timescales (ending from 18<sup>th</sup> April). The primary purpose of testing is changing from population-wide testing to reduce transmission, to targeted testing to support clinical care. Contingency to respond to new harmful variants will, at times, include additional testing.

We will also continue to monitor where the virus is through surveillance programmes. Further details on other aspects of testing (including close contact testing) can be found in the [Test and Protect Transition Plan](#).

From 18<sup>th</sup> April, it will still be possible for local health protection teams to opt to make use of asymptomatic testing in outbreak management situations in schools/settings, if their expert judgement is that it is appropriate to do so.

Schools can continue to distribute test kits to staff and secondary pupils as usual until the end of this term, and ELC settings can continue to distribute test kits to staff until 17<sup>th</sup> April, in line with the arrangements set out below.

### **Orders and deliveries – final arrangements**

Schools and ELC settings should only order additional LFD test kits (via the usual route) if they need them to support regular testing up until the end of this term (or until 17<sup>th</sup> April for ELC settings).

On this basis, the final date for orders to be placed is 15:00 on **29<sup>th</sup> March**, taking into account those local authorities whose schools remain open until the second week of April.

The ordering pathway will cease to be operational for schools and ELC settings after 1500 on 29<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Excess test kits/remaining stock**

Schools and ELC settings should distribute their remaining stock by 17<sup>th</sup> April.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to all of you for the exceptional support you have offered to the programme over the past year. We are hugely grateful to you for the dedicated way in which you have helped us to deliver this significant undertaking across Scotland.

**Scottish Government**  
Early Learning & Childcare