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To: Registered Care Home providers (adults)
Copied to: Chief Execs of Boards and Local
Authorities
Chief Officers Health & Social Care Partnerships
Chief Social Work Officers
Directors of Public Health
Nurse Directors
SPOCS
Scottish Care
Care Inspectorate
COSLA
Coalition of Care and support Providers in
Scotland

4 September 2020

Dear Colleague

I wanted to write to you personally to provide you with an update on issues experienced over the last two weeks in terms of demand on testing across UK, which is having a significant impact on turnaround times for Covid test results for you and your staff. It is unacceptable that you are waiting almost a week in some instances to get the results.

Scotland's dedicated care home workers are on the frontline of our national pandemic response and your work is hugely valued. It is crucial that you are able to access conclusive testing with results provided in a timely manner.

I want to assure you that I am fully aware of these issues and have raised this as a significant concern with the UK Government. My officials are also working closely with UK officials to secure increased capacity in the UK Glasgow Lighthouse Lab throughout September and over the next few months.

In parallel, we are working hard to increase capacity in our NHS in Scotland as well as looking at how we can use this increased capacity to re-route testing of care home staff over the next few weeks and months, ensuring a more resilient and efficient process. We will update you on these developments in full as soon as possible, but I know that there has been a lot of progress in some local areas over the last few days.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

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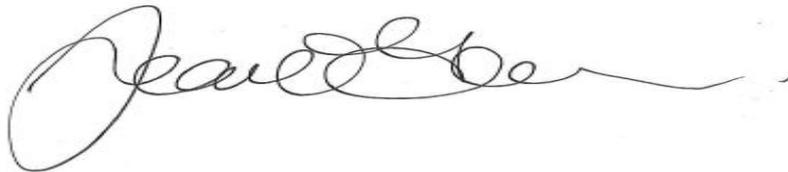


I want to assure you that we are working hard both to press the UK government to resolve the issues with their Lighthouse Labs and to increase our own capacity for test processing.

I want to thank you for your continued patience and support over the last few months in encouraging your staff to take the test each week. I have been pleased that our joint work has seen the level of testing increase week on week and would encourage you to continue to support this during these times of high demand.

It is our absolute intention to resolve these issues and lessen the disruption you face over the coming weeks. If you have any concerns or queries please email testandprotectqueries@gov.scot

Kind regards



JEANE FREEMAN