

Deputy Chief Nursing Officer

Diane Murray

Directorate for Mental Health and Social Care

Kate Hall

T : 0300 244 4000

E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

To:

All agencies who deploy staff to adult care homes in Scotland

All adult care homes in Scotland

Care Inspectorate

SSSC

CC for information:

NHS Board Chief Executives

NHS Board Nurse Directors

NHS Board Public Health Directors

HSCP Chief Operating Officers

Local Authority Chief Executives

11 February 2021

Dear All

Guidance for deployment of agency staff to care homes during COVID-19 pandemic

Firstly I would like to thank all agencies, and the staff they have deployed to the care home sector, for the support they have provided to care homes during the pandemic. The services provided have been essential to maintaining provision of care in the sector.

As you know care homes are environments that have proved to be particularly susceptible to Coronavirus during this pandemic and a number of actions have been taken to reduce the risk of transmission in this sector. I am writing to inform you of additional guidance that has been developed in order to support safe deployment of agency staff to care homes.

This guidance is detailed in Annex 1 and it applies to **all** agencies who deploy staff to care homes in any role including: nursing, social care, domestic, ancillary or administrative roles. It has been developed with stakeholder engagement from the sector and defines the responsibilities of agencies, care homes, and the staff who are being deployed in relation to: staff testing, movement of staff between care homes, risk assessment and record keeping.

The guidance applies with immediate effect and is an addendum to and supersedes advice about agency staff movement described in the Adult Social Care Winter preparedness plan 2020-21.

Page 1 of 2



If you have any follow up questions at this point then please do not hesitate to contact CareHomesCOVIDsupport@gov.scot

With very best wishes to you all



Diane Murray
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer



Kate Hall
Deputy Director: Remobilisation, Recovery
and Reform: Adult Social Care
Mental Health and Social Care Directorate

Annex 1

Guidance for the Deployment of Agency Staff to Care Homes During the COVID-19 Pandemic

11 February 2021

This guidance applies to **all** agencies who deploy staff to care homes in any role including nursing, social care, domestic, ancillary or administrative roles and is designed to support safe deployment of agency staff to care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PLEASE NOTE: this is current guidance which may be updated at regular intervals to reflect the changing situation of the pandemic.

Existing regulatory frameworks continue to apply to agencies and the members of staff they employ. As such agencies must continue to ensure that staff deployed by them are fit to practice, as outlined in professional codes of practice. This will include compliance with the [SSSC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers; Code of Practice for Social Service Workers](#) and the [Nursing Midwifery Code of Practice 'The Code'](#), as appropriate. This includes ensuring staff have the skills and competencies to meet the expectation of the role to which they are deployed. For those regulated staff ensuring staff are skilled and knowledgeable in infection prevention and control (IPC) procedures and practices will be of particular importance prior to deployment into care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 specific IPC guidance for care home staff has been published as an Addendum to the National Infection Prevention Control Manual¹ and induction training is available on [TURAS](#). In addition to the regulatory frameworks and IPC guidance the following guidance applies;

- All agency staff must be tested weekly for COVID-19 prior to deployment. It should be noted that where staff have previously tested positive to COVID-19 they do not require to be tested weekly for 90 days unless they experience symptoms in which case testing would take place through population symptomatic testing routes. Where

¹ <http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/scottish-covid-19-care-home-infection-prevention-and-control-addendum/>

agency staff are block booked they should participate in weekly PCR testing and twice weekly LFD testing with other care home staff.

- Care homes should ensure they ask for proof of testing to protect residents, their own staff and other agency staff.
- Agency staff should be block booked by care homes to enable staff to remain at the same home or client group wherever possible.
- Agency staff should not normally work across different care homes unless in very exceptional circumstances. To support this staff working for more than one agency must declare if they have worked in other health or social care settings when working for other agencies or employers.
- Agency staff should not travel to and from work in uniforms but change on premises and ensure uniform is washed at appropriate temperature.
- The agency should carry out health risk assessments on staff including staff with increased risk of contracting COVID-19 and keep on file to support health and wellbeing of staff deployed to care homes.
- The agency should keep a record of where staff have been deployed, test results and any requirement to isolate by the agency.
- Staff must not work contemporaneously across more than one care setting where there is an outbreak / active positive cases.
- Agencies must clarify the COVID-19 status within any care setting at the time of booking staff for deployment.