



Wandsworth Council

Adults Social Care and Public Health
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Dear Home Manager

Weekend Testing in Care Homes

I would like to acknowledge all the hard-work you and your staff have put in and continue to do so during such unprecedented times.

While dealing with the added day-to-day pressures of running a care home, you and your team have been able to respond promptly and valiantly to the unique challenges of COVID-19, and at all times, prioritising the needs of residents and service users as the focus of your care.

I would also like to thank you and your staff for consistently producing high quality samples for testing. Only a very small proportion of tests from care homes have been returned as void or inconclusive.

As you are aware, the national testing programme has faced a variety of challenges in relation to testing capacity. This resulted in pushing back the dates for rolling out regular testing to all care homes to the **31st August**.

Therefore, from **31st August**, **all** care homes can now register for repeat, regular testing and receive test kits (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>).

However, there are issues affecting the turnaround times for test results and I am writing to ask for your help. Because the vast majority of care home testing is carried out during the week, this means labs are dealing with a significant surge of swabs during the week, resulting in under-used lab capacity at weekends. This surge of testing during the week also means that test results take longer, because of the volume of tests that need processing at that time.

If care homes undertook testing more evenly throughout the week, this would increase the overall testing capacity enabling more people to be tested.

Therefore, I am asking that you consider testing at weekends where possible, to help us get a test to everyone who needs it.

Once-more thank you for your continuous support and hard work, during such extraordinary periods in the care sector.

Yours faithfully

Shannon Katiyo
Director of Public Health

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service and value