

Director for COVID-19 Testing

Annabel Turpie



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To:

Chief Social Work Officers

Directors of Public Health

cc:

Health Board Chief Executive Officers

Colin Ramsay, Health Protection Scotland

Gabe Docherty, Chair of Directors of Public Health

Group

Ben Farrugia, Social Work Scotland

14 May 2020

Dear colleague,

Coronavirus testing for children being moved between or to new care placements.

We are aware that in emergency situations when a child is being accommodated or moved between care placements, queries are arising about whether it is helpful to test the child for the presence of coronavirus. These may particularly arise if the child has been in contact with an individual with symptoms of Covid-19, or with someone who has tested positive for the virus, or if the child has returned from having absconded to unsafe situations where the risk of infection has been unclear.

A decision on whether it is appropriate for a child in this situation to be tested should be made locally in discussion with the Health Protection Team and this guidance seeks to allow individual risk assessment of each case. The decision on whether a test is appropriate in the specific circumstance is a clinical decision, informed by information on the context, clinical needs and urgency of the situation and appropriate risk assessment by the social work professionals and public health team involved. The decision to test and the results must not impact on the urgency of responding to the needs of the child and ensuring their safety and wellbeing. However, the placement should take account of the health protection and infection prevention control requirements, if the child is thought to have had a significant exposure or symptoms that could be COVID-19. The local health protection team will advise on whether the exposure was significant.

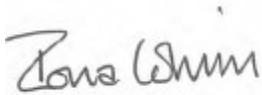
Decisions (or recommendations to a hearing) on placements rest with the local authority and with the head of the residential care facility, if relevant. For family-based care settings, carers are also partners in decision making about the care they offer. Those who are being tested (and potential carers for a child being tested) should have a clear explanation of what a test does and does not show, and why testing is, or is not being advised in each case.

A test is of use in a symptomatic child to ensure that the symptoms are not due to COVID-19. In children with a possible exposure within the last 14 days, a test can be used to rule in

COVID-19 (i.e. show that they have COVID-19), but not to rule out development of the infection over the course of the 14 days i.e. the fact that they are negative at the time of testing does not mean that they might not still develop the infection within the incubation period. Therefore, if it is thought that they have had a significant exposure then they should be isolated and followed up as advised by the health protection team for the entire 14 days following last exposure even if they test negative.

Social work teams will wish to ensure they have routes of communication in place to have these discussions in an emergency situation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iona Colvin'.

Iona Colvin
Chief Social Work Adviser/Interim Director of Children and Families

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annabel Turpie'.

Annabel Turpie
Director for COVID-19 Testing