

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 1 February 2021
Title:	Testing Programme and Test and Protect
Responsible Director:	Lynne McNiven, Interim Director of Public Health (Joint) Dr Joy Tomlinson, Interim Director of Public Health (Joint)
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1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Awareness

This paper relates to:

- Government policy / directive

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

This paper provides an assurance report to Members on our response to the COVID 19 Pandemic, in relation to our Testing Programme and Test and Protect Service. NHS Ayrshire & Arran provide a whole system, robust Testing Programme and Test and Protect Service of Contact Tracing. Together these allow us to identify cases of COVID-19 across our communities and quickly identify and interrupt routes of potential spread. Testing and Contact Tracing contribute directly to the management of outbreaks and breaking transmission of infection.

2.2 Background

Contact Tracing

The model of Contact Tracing delivery in Scotland is embedded firmly within the NHS. There are two separate but interdependent elements to the national model, a National Contact Tracing team completes 'simple' contact tracing follow-up. This national team works in tandem with Local Health Board contact tracing teams, which are responsible for follow up of complex cases, for example in hospital and healthcare settings as well as local workplaces or school outbreaks.

Since March 2020, we have gradually established a comprehensive Test and Protect Contact Tracing Team, and this has expanded incrementally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic requirements. The local service consists of trained, supported and experienced individuals who provide cover 12 hours per day/seven days per week, which ensures sustainability and a rapid response to the pandemic. Contact Tracing is reliant on rapid processing of laboratory test results so that transmission of the virus is 'shut down' quickly.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran is consistently achieving the target number of hours and have increased these beyond the minimum requirements in response to the rising numbers of index cases seen over the festive period.

As at 19 January 2021, we have 144 staff trained as Contact Tracers (92.28 WTE).

Testing Programme Service

Societal responses to COVID-19 have changed markedly over the course of the pandemic. We have moved from zero testing in February to a mass roll out of testing to support a wide range of functions. As the pandemic evolves and changes we must be flexible and respond rapidly to all associated policy change.

Resilience Planning, including the ongoing development of our multiagency Community Outbreak Escalation Mass Testing plans are central to supporting the rapid mobilisation of testing services across Ayrshire.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran's COVID-19 Testing Strategy and associated governance processes are embedded across the organisation to ensure national changes to COVID-19 Testing Policy are quickly embedded in Ayrshire.

2.3 Assessment

Creation of the Gold, Silver and Bronze governance groups have ensured partnership working at every stage of change within the COVID 19 pandemic. This framework of meetings also provides an opportunity to identify areas of shared focus. Community Planning ensures local outcomes with regards to our Testing Service and Test and Protect requirements, to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of the population and ensure consistency across Ayrshire for both our staff and patients. All areas of the Test and Protect Programme and the Testing Programme are designed to allow quality patient centred care

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

All areas of the Test and Protect Team and the Testing programme are designed to allow quality patient centred care. The areas that we are working on through the Testing Expansion Programme is key to ensuring both staff and patient safety. All Contact Tracers are trained utilising nationally developed materials. In addition a local educational programme has been established for Contact Tracers. NHS Infection Prevention and Control staff play a key role in ensuring patient safety within our hospital settings and are integral to the testing structures within Ayrshire.

2.3.2 Workforce

A number of staff have been redeployed to assist with the Testing and Test and Protect Teams, the majority of Contact Tracing staff are not substantively employed in

these roles. Key roles within the Contact Tracing workforce have now been appointed and a review initiated of workforce requirements until March 2022. As well as the redeployed staff, at present there are a number of additional staff trained to provide surge capacity. These staff will continue to provide their normal core duties across the organisation when not required to work as a contact tracer in times of increased prevalence and increased workload. HR are consistently identifying staff in the “shielding category” who are able to assist, with non-patient facing elements of Testing and Test and Protect. We will increase our substantive workforce within the Testing and Test and Protect Teams in 2021.

2.3.3 Financial

The programme has a budget of £1.1 million in 2020/21. It has spent £0.5m up to end of December, with monthly spend expected to increase as recruitment is ongoing., The programme is expected to be close to the budgeted level at March 2021.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

The Testing Programme and Test and Protect are made up of multidisciplinary teams who work across all sectors of the NHS and partner organisations therefore, risk management is an essential element of these new services. All areas that require to be risk assessed have been identified and shared with all relevant managers to escalate through the usual routes if necessary.

A Testing Programme Strategy is in place along with a Community Outbreak Escalation plan. Our testing governance structure follows a strict command and control approach with Bronze, Silver and Gold level groups in place to provide clinical governance and management of the system. This is being replicated for the Test & Protect programme. There are also key links between the Health Protection specialist team and the Contact Tracing programme. Operational meetings take place twice daily between the specialist team and Contact Tracing leads.

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

An impact assessment has not been completed as the NHS is in a state of an emergency and are operating under Scottish Government policy and guidance.

2.3.6 Other impacts

Creation of the Gold, Silver and Bronze meetings have ensured partnership working at every stage of change within the COVID 19 pandemic. This framework of meetings also provides an opportunity to identify areas of shared focus.

Community Planning ensures local outcomes with regards to our testing requirements, to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of the population and ensure consistency across Ayrshire for both our staff and patients. The Strategic Alliance Local Resilience partnership provides the oversight of the NHS and local partner agencies in terms of the response to the pandemic and ensures that this consistency is maintained across Ayrshire and provides a shared vision, with all four local Chief Executives represented within the Partnership.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Membership of our Gold, Silver and Bronze meetings includes Staff Representatives, as well as Health and Social Care Partnership Management representatives ensuring staff are kept engaged and informed of all key decisions made in relation to the Testing programme and the Test and Protect Team.

Our Communications Team form part of our daily meetings, to ensure that relevant communication regarding the fast moving requirements from Scottish Government in relation to current testing requirements for our patients and staff is shared with all staff and partners. Relevant Standard Operating Procedures that have been approved by our Executive Management Team are held on our local intranet system and can be accessed by all NHS staff, directly or indirectly.

Weekly education meetings have taken place since July with Directors of Education and colleagues from further education establishments. This has guaranteed a close working relationship and effective joint planning to ensure our Children and Young People in Ayrshire along with school staff are supported appropriately during the pandemic.

2.3.8 Route to the meeting

Situation Reports are submitted 3 times per week to Ayrshire and Arran's Emergency Management Team, where any Standard Operating Procedures or decisions required are taken accordingly and are shared and agreed at this forum.

As well as the Emergency Management Team Meetings, there is a Gold, Silver and Bronze structure in place.

2.4 Recommendations

Members are asked to receive this report for assurance that NHS Ayrshire & Arran has a robust programme to support Test and Protect.