

Preventing infection in care homes

Recent evidence has suggested we need to rethink our approach to helping minimise infection in care homes. This is because infection is often spread quite far before we have intervened up until now. We are proposing to phase in new processes for testing and infection control and although this will take time to embed, we believe it is the right approach.

For homes with 1 suspected case of Covid-19

Any home with **1 suspected case should contact ECC and PHE within 24 hours**. We will arrange infection control support from NHS infection control teams.

We would wish to test all staff and residents. This is because in a study elsewhere the numbers with no symptoms and positive tests was substantial.

You can contact ECC via email at provider.resilience@essex.gov.uk, or by telephoning our Rapid Response Team on 033 301 31271. Phone and email are monitored daily between 8:30am and 5:30pm

To contact PHE: the PHE Corona Response Cell (CRC) is available from 9am to 6pm daily on: 0300 303 8537. Upon hearing the first message please press the number 5 on your keypad – don't continue listening.

If you find it difficult to get through please email all details of the situation together with a direct number for us to call you back to oe.crc@phe.gov.uk. A member of the PHE staff will call back as soon as possible and advise accordingly.

For homes where there are no cases

We would wish to work with homes with **no cases** to regularly test staff and residents. We are yet to establish how best to do this including the frequency and will keep you informed on how this is to be achieved.

We need to think how we shield homes with no cases, and shielding will need to go on for some months.

For homes with established outbreaks

For homes with established outbreaks we would urge best infection control practice advised by PHE and NHS infection control teams. [The link to this information is here](#)

I would urge care homes to follow the test results action sent last week as the safest way to protect your care home residents. Appended

Mike Gogarty
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Essex County Council