

21 December 2021

Covid-19 – Care Home Staff Testing

Under Freedom of information, I would like to request the following information:

- **What percentage of care home staff from within the Belfast Trust CHOOSE not to get tested as part of the homes weekly testing programme?**

Information as at 13 December 2021 – Older People’s services 2%

From a Learning Disability Care Home perspective - of approximately 125 staff, 8%

- **What percentage of care home staff do get tested weekly as part of the homes weekly testing programme?**

Information as at 13 December 2021 – Older People’s services 98%

From a Learning Disability Care Home perspective - of approximately 125 staff, 92%

- **Why are agency staff deployed to care homes, not required to undergo weekly PCR testing?**

Any agency staff deployed to a care home will undertake testing requirements in line with that home’s weekly national screening schedule, as part of that care home’s staff team.

- **Why is weekly PCR testing of all care home staff (including agency staff deployed to work in care homes) not compulsory?**

Please find details below from the Regional Care Home COVID-19 Testing Guidance:

Providing testing within all care homes helps care homes to protect residents and staff and is an important part of the national effort to tackle coronavirus. Regular care home testing is aimed at identifying asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 (that is cases who have no symptoms) and to support early intervention to minimise the risk of spread.

All care home staff without symptoms can be tested and regular testing for care home staff should be undertaken WEEKLY (Pillar 2).

The Department of Health sets policy decisions on whether testing will be voluntary or mandatory. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust cannot comment on that decision.