

COVID-O COMMITTEE (97)
Tuesday 22 December | 12.00 - 12.30

ACTIONS

1. **DHSC** to increase the staff testing regime to once per week with both a PCR and a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test, and to offer additional mid-week LFD tests from 23 December.
2. **DHSC** to implement daily LFD testing in care homes in Tier 4 areas where there is an outbreak from 23 December.
3. **DHSC** to announce the £149 million fund to support care homes to operationalise additional staff and visitor testing on 23 December.
4. **DHSC and NHSE** to continue prioritising the rapid deployment of the Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine to care homes, with the ambition of giving staff and residents in all large care homes (with over 50 residents) the first dose by the end of December.
5. **DHSC and HMT** to write to the Committee no later than 30 December setting out the agreed approach to fund the costs of stopping staff movement via an alternative mechanism to the furlough scheme, ready to implement from 4 January.
6. **NHS England** to share updated daily bed occupancy data with DHSC and the C-19 TF, identifying where delays are caused by Covid positive patients awaiting discharge to a designated setting, as soon as it is available and no later than the middle of January.
7. **NHS England and DHSC** to write to the Committee by no later than 28 December with interim discharge data, identifying where pressures are greatest on the NHS and with updated Capacity Tracker data showing bed availability and occupancy in designated settings by area.
8. **DHSC** to write to the Paymaster General with an update on issues relating to the capacity of care homes that are also operating as designated settings and on her concerns about PPE and testing supplies.

DECISIONS

1. COVID-O agreed there was a clear and shared understanding of the need to stop staff movement between care homes to reduce the risk of transmission from the new strain of the virus and to meet the costs associated with it. The Committee agreed that the furlough scheme was not the right mechanism to deliver this and that DHSC and HM-Treasury should decide on an alternative approach by 30 December, ready to implement in early January.