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[Rolling testing programme for care homes](#)

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Health Minister Robin Swann has announced a rolling programme of Covid-19 testing in Northern Ireland's care homes.

COVID-19 UPDATE

This will involve regular testing for all residents and staff in homes which do not have a confirmed outbreak of the virus. It will commence on Monday 3 August 2020 and will involve testing all staff on a fortnightly basis and all residents on a monthly basis.

Testing continues to be prioritised for care homes with an outbreak.

The Minister stated: **“With the threat from Covid-19 still present, we must continue to do all we can to support care homes. That means protecting residents and staff.**

“I want to again pay tribute to care home staff for all the work they have done during this pandemic.

“I also want to reiterate my commitment to building a better future for the social care sector, through reform and investment.”

The fortnightly testing for staff reflects the fact they have the potential to come into contact with the virus in the wider community. The frequency of testing of both staff and residents will continue to be kept under close review and may need to be increased depending on emerging evidence, and on the community transmission rates of the virus in Northern Ireland in the coming months.

It is also acknowledged that testing can be an intrusive and upsetting experience for frail and elderly residents.

The Department of the Health will continue to actively monitor and assess current and emerging science relating to Covid-19, to inform our approach to testing in care homes.

The Minister added: **“I want to place on record my thanks to all those who have worked to significantly increase our testing capacity in recent months.”**

Notes to editors:

1. For media enquiries please contact DoH Press Office by email: pressoffice@health-ni.gov.uk.
2. Follow us on twitter [@healthdpt](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab).
3. The Executive Information Service operates an out of hours service for media enquiries between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. The duty press officer can be contacted on 028 9037 8110.

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