

the benefits of removing some of the complexity from the system. The overall feedback about using the UK portal and Lighthouse labs from care homes has been positive. The care home testing leads in the LHBs are alert to the need to provide IT and other transitional support to care homes for moving to the UK portal and Lighthouse labs if there is a policy change.

- **Assurances about Lighthouse laboratory capacity from the UK Government's Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) following reports in the media during the weekend of 1 and 2 August.** DHSC have confirmed that:

- The capacity is available and the issues impacting the testing programme for care homes in England relate to Randox testing kits (which have not been supplied to care homes in Wales since the middle of June when only Kingfisher kits have been supplied) and lab capacity constraints.
- DHSC have protected Wales' satellite testing capacity through the Lighthouse labs and are able to process orders from care homes in Wales as they are made.
- The Lighthouse labs are currently operating at a daily capacity of 85,000 tests rather than 105,000 tests, which has resulted in our current allocation for the satellite channel capacity (a 5% share) for Wales being 3,500 tests a day, whereas we should have a daily allocation of 5,400 tests.
- We have not been using the lower 3,500 daily allocation and as steps are taken to increase the satellite channel capacity, our allocation for Wales will increase.
- In the event we choose to route all asymptomatic testing of care home staff through the UK portal and the Lighthouse labs and issues arose relating to the capacity of the Lighthouse labs, we would have the contingency of being able to ask the LHBs to conduct testing through the NHS Wales labs.

15. Duration of the next testing cycle. Care homes have had to implement a number of testing policies during the past three months, with testing of all residents and staff in May and June followed by weekly testing of staff for four weeks from 15 June and for a further four weeks to 9 August. We, therefore, **recommended that the new policy is applied for a period of eight weeks, from 10 August to 4 October**, based on the following:

- It would allow four rounds of fortnightly testing to establish an evidence base to monitor infection and transmission rates in care homes. We would continue to closely monitor the data across Wales and broken down by LHB through weekly data reports; and
- It would enable the care homes a longer period to establish new ways of working. If the recommendations for the frequency of testing and the testing channel are agreed, it would involve a switch to using the UK portal and testing