Information

Sheet Number:

2017-21/196

Providing support for County Councillors

for County Councillors

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| From: | Alison Bell |

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| Relevant SLT Director and sign-off date:  | Trudi Grant 15 October 2021 |

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| Date:  | 15 October 2021 |

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| To:  | All County Councillors  |

**Member Briefing**

**National Testing Issue Affecting Somerset Residents**

Following recent concerns of more people testing positive on a Lateral Flow Device then receiving a negative PCR test result, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) formerly PHE, released a statement today to announce that NHS Test and Trace has investigated and PCR test analysis has been suspended at a private laboratory - Immensa Health Clinic Ltd in Wolverhampton.

While investigations are underway into the precise cause, NHS Test and Trace estimate that around 400,000 samples have been processed through the lab, the vast majority of which will have been negative results. An estimated 43,000 people may have been given incorrect negative PCR test results between 8 September and 12 October, mostly in the South West of England. We do not know how many Somerset tests have been affected and the investigation is ongoing

This is an isolated incident attributed to one laboratory and all samples taken after 12 October are now being redirected to other laboratories. The number of tests carried out at the Immensa laboratory are small in the context of the wider network and testing availability is unaffected around the country.

**NHS Test and Trace is contacting the people that could still be infectious to advise them to take another test.**Close contacts who are symptomatic will also be advised to take a PCR test in line with normal practice.  Anyone with Covid-19 symptoms should book a PCR test. Those with a positive LFD test should get a follow up PCR test to confirm they have Covid-19.

There are no technical issues with the LFD or PCR test kits themselves, or the local testing sites, and people should continue to test as normal. Other labs are working normally.

We are advising people continue to use LFD and PCR tests as they normally would and to retest if still showing Covid-19 symptoms after receiving a negative PCR test result for tests taken before 13 October. The SCC PH advice remains, if you are showing any symptoms of Covid-19, or have a positive LFD test get a PCR test and if this is positive stay at home and self-isolate for ten days to avoid infecting others.

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