

- To:
- Chief Financial Officer of all Acute trusts
  - Pathology Incident Directors
  - Directors of Nursing
  - Medical Directors
  - Infection Control leads

NHS England  
Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
London  
SE1 8UG

**2 March 2023**

- cc.
- NHS England regional directors
  - Regional & ICB System Control Centre leads
  - All NHS Acute, Mental Health and Community Foundation Trust and Trust Chief executives

Dear Colleagues,

## **Changes to COVID-19 testing – use cases consultation underway and financial arrangements**

We last wrote to you regarding changes to [COVID-19 testing protocols](#) in August of 2022.

We are now preparing for a further set of changes in use cases reflecting an updated assessment of pandemic and health impacts of COVID-19 based on the latest public health advice, and a change to the way in which COVID-19 PCR tests will be funded in the NHS.

### **Clinical use cases**

UKHSA is working with the British Infection Association and NHS teams to confirm its approach to COVID-19 testing in the NHS in England from 1 April 2023. This will include defining the use cases – for both COVID-19 diagnosis and reducing transmission - that will be recommended across the NHS systems. Once this work is complete, the NHS will be required to operationalise new protocols in line with revised advice from UKHSA. We expect that this will reduce the requirement for PCR testing for NHS patients and staff.

### **Funding for PCR testing**

As set out in the [2023/24 revenue finance and contracting planning guidance](#), funding for COVID-19 high-throughput and rapid PCR testing services are moving to a fixed allocations based funding model for 2023/24. From 1 April 2023, the new financial arrangements for COVID-19 testing will apply. Further information on ICB allocations and

associated finance and procurement guidance have been issued to ICB PFMS portals. If there are significant further changes in clinical use cases and/or technology that UKHSA outlines for 2023/24 and these materially differ from the assumptions set out to establish ICB allocations, the allocations will be reviewed.

When UKHSA's use case work is complete in early March 2023, we will write to you again to set out in full the expectations for COVID-19 testing in the NHS for 2023/24. In the meantime, please ensure the appropriate clinical and operational teams are aware of the changes that will apply from April 1 2023.

I would like to thank you and your teams for your continued hard work managing the COVID-19 response to date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Powis', is positioned above the typed name.

**Professor Stephen Powis**  
National Medical Director  
NHS England