

Core brief

Daily update

(13 September 2023, 1.50pm)

Topics in this Core Brief:

- Changes to Scottish Government's COVID19 testing guidance
- Cyber Crime: Recognising the signs
- Important Information Regarding Pension Benefit Statements for Employees Affected by the 2015 Remedy

Changes to Scottish Government's COVID19 testing guidance

The [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual \(NIPCM\)](#) and the [Care Home Infection Prevention and Control Manual \(CH IPCM\)](#) have been updated to reflect the Scottish Government CMO Letter ([SGHD/CMO\(2023\)12](#)).

This outlines changes to the Scottish Government's COVID-19 Testing Guidance.

Testing protocol for COVID-19 will revert to testing of clinically symptomatic patients to support clinical diagnosis and patient placement, and for outbreak management as per the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual or on advice from local Infection Prevention and Control Teams or local Health Protection Teams. Testing for those who are eligible for COVID-19 treatments will also continue to be available. **Routine asymptomatic testing for COVID-19 pre-discharge from hospital to a care home or hospice will be retained to provide additional reassurance for these settings.**

While testing is paused if staff are unwell stay at home. Staff who have symptoms of a respiratory infection should follow the [NHS Inform](#) advice. Staff are expected to manage their risk in relation to COVID-19 in much the same way as any other respiratory infection.

Specific reference to asymptomatic COVID-19 testing has been removed from the NIPCM and CH IPCM. Please note that COVID-19 testing for discharge to care homes/hospices is the **only routine** asymptomatic testing that has been retained as part of Scottish Government Policy.

The following sections within the NIPCM and CH IPCM have been reviewed, updated or archived to reflect a pause in asymptomatic testing and removal of any reference specific to COVID-19:

- NIPCM – Chapter 1 Section 1.1
- NIPCM – Chapter 2 Section 2.1
- NIPCM – Chapter 3 – specific references to COVID-19 removed.
- NIPCM – Neonatal Addendum - specific references to COVID-19 removed.
- CH IPCM – Chapter 1 Section 1 - specific references to COVID-19 removed. Link to Public Health Scotland COVID-19 guidance included.
- Appendix 19 – COVID archived.
- COVID-19 Hospital Testing Table - archived.
- Assessing Staff contacts of COVID-19 in NHS acute healthcare settings – archived.
- SARS-CoV-2 A-Z Entry – links updated.
- Transition document: Winter Respiratory Infection IPC addendum to NIPCM - archived.

Health and care staff should follow the guidance contained in both the [NIPCM](#) and [CH IPCM](#). This reflects a return to pre-pandemic IPC practices.

Cyber Crime: Recognising the signs

Cyber-crime and the Threat Actors who deploy it, continue to use ever more elaborate ways of stealing both your personal and your organisations information. It's easy to assume the messages arriving in your inbox or calls you receive are legitimate, particularly when they are from trusted senders and senior individuals within an organisation. The best form of defence is to recognise communications which are out of the ordinary and ask you to take actions which you wouldn't normally expect.

Following up from August's Core Brief on Spear Phishing, we will examine Whale Phishing.

What is Whale Phishing?

Whale Phishing is a form of social engineering where a threat actor will target individuals or a group of individuals within an organisation pretending to be a senior executive member of staff or a group of senior executive level staff. Like Spear Phishing, Whale Phishing can be harder to identify than traditional Phishing attempts because it can originate from trusted email addresses which may themselves have been compromised leading to targeted emails to individuals or groups.

Although most Whale Phishing attacks are designed to defraud the target for monetary gain, there have been instances where it has been used to reveal sensitive information or install malicious software.

Whale Phishing can also be more successful as it relies on staff trusting, and not questioning, emails pertaining to be from senior executive level individuals, for example, Chief Executive / Director or Chief Officer level.

Things to look out for:

- Emails asking for financial transfers and referring to senior staff, for example, an email asking for a money transfer to the Director of Finance
- Emails with an unfamiliar greeting or salutation
- Inconsistencies in email addresses, links and internet links
- Suspicious attachments
- Emails asking for money transfers via systems like Western Union or asking you to buy prepaid cards and provide serial numbers
- Emails or calls requesting **login credentials, payment information or sensitive data**
- Emails asking for alternative communication forms such as mobile phone numbers or WhatsApp numbers.

What can I do?

If you have any doubt about the authenticity of an email, do not respond to the sender and confirm the content of the email via a trusted alternative route, for example, via text message or phone call.

Reporting suspicious content

It's important to remember never to click on any links or open any emails which look even remotely suspicious.

If you suspect you have received anything to your work email address containing malicious content you can report it to: spam@ggc.scot.nhs.uk.

Important Information Regarding Pension Benefit Statements for Employees Affected by the 2015 Remedy

Employees who are working and contributing to a pension, and/or have deferred their benefits, will receive a dual annual benefit statement from August 2024. This will provide estimates of benefits in both the legacy and reformed (CARE) schemes. The SPPA is currently preparing to offer this choice to eligible members and getting everything ready to deliver dual Annual Benefit Statements in 2024. As a result, they will not be issuing Annual Benefit Statements for 2023 to those members who are eligible for Remedy as these will have limited value.

More detailed information on this, along with a retirement calculator providing an illustration of benefits in the legacy and reformed scheme, can be found on the

SPPA website: [2023-10 NHS Circular 2023 Annual Benefit Statement Exercise.pdf](#)
(pensions.gov.scot)

Remember, for all your latest news stories, visit our new Staffnet Hub:
[GGC-Staffnet Hub - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)



Staff are reminded to make sure their [personal contact details are up to date on eESS](#).

It is important to share Core Brief with colleagues who do not have access to a computer.
A full archive of printable PDFs are available on [website](#)