

# **Residential Rehabilitation in Scotland: A status report on current COVID-19 testing, vaccination and other infection control procedures**

**October 2021**

# Residential Rehabilitation in Scotland: A status report on current COVID-19 testing, vaccination and other infection control procedures

9<sup>th</sup> June 2021

## Executive summary

- Of the 20 residential rehab facilities surveyed, 17 replied . Thirteen of the facilities provided residential treatment for both alcohol and drug addiction (76%), 3 provided treatment for drugs only and 1 provided treatment for alcohol only.
- Of these facilities, the vast majority (n = 16; 94%) reported testing of staff, however, only 8 (47%) reported testing of residents. Currently visitors are being tested at 5 facilities (29%), however a number of those not testing do not allow visitors within the facility.
- A mixed picture emerged across the rehab facilities around types of tests used, frequency and method of administration, processing and recording of test results. The majority of facilities (82%) reported that they felt residents would be able to do supervised self-testing should this be deemed appropriate.
- The vast majority of members of staff at residential rehab facilities had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination (86%).
- Over half of residents at residential rehab facilities had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination (57%).
- The majority of facilities (71%) surveyed reported isolating residents upon arrival. All facilities reported having specific isolation protocols in place in the event of a resident contracting COVID-19 whilst residing at their facility.
- Ten facilities (59%) reported currently allowing visitors to their facility. All facilities reported adopting specific protocols around visitors to their facility.

## 1. Background

Tackling the high level of drugs deaths in Scotland is a priority for the Scottish Government. The First Minister made a [statement](#) to parliament on 20 January 2021 which set out a National Mission to save and improve lives. One of the priorities is to ensure individuals have access to and remain in residential rehabilitation during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the [COVID-19 Testing Strategy](#), the Scottish Government has committed to using testing and vaccination to protect the vulnerable. People recovering from drug addiction often have a range of complex health needs which mean they may be at increased risk from COVID-19<sup>1,2</sup>. In residential settings in particular, regular testing would likely reduce the risk of transmission between vulnerable residents<sup>3</sup>, and so it is important to understand current practices across the different services. People entering residential rehabilitation may already have been vaccinated through the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#) prioritisation process. However, some of those entering residential rehab, especially those coming to rehab from temporary accommodation, may have not been able to access their vaccine. It is important to ensure that the vaccine is offered to all people as part of their pathway into residential rehabilitation.

Previously, the working group on residential rehab, chaired by David McCartney, published a [mapping report](#) which set out to better understand the current residential rehab landscape in Scotland. This was followed by a [report on capacity](#) which found that there were least 418 residential rehab beds/ placements available in Scotland, across the 20 facilities surveyed. These reports served primarily as scene setting exercises, to inform the work of the working group and did not explore the efforts made by providers to adapt to the ongoing pandemic. A short-life working group on Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Pathways (SLWG) has been established to design, implement, monitor and support pathways for vaccination and testing for people receiving residential treatment for problematic alcohol and drug use. After consultation with health boards and liaison with the Recovery and Residential Providers Group, the SLWG recommended that research should be conducted to better understand current practices around the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This report aims to provide an improved estimate of current COVID-19 testing and vaccination in residential rehab settings in Scotland and to better understand how services are adapting to minimise the risk of infection within their service. This report will also inform the guidance on vaccination and testing produced by the SLWG, which will help support residential rehab providers create a safe environment for their residents during the time of the pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> [COVID-19: guidance for commissioners and providers of services for people who use drugs or alcohol - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Advice for People Who Use Drugs and COVID-19 – SDF – Scottish Drugs Forum](#)

<sup>3</sup> [S0343 Care Homes Analysis.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## 2. Methodology

A survey on current COVID-19 practices was sent by email to all 20 residential rehab providers in Scotland. Residential rehab providers were identified as part of the working group's mapping exercise in December 2020<sup>4</sup>. Since this time, additional rehab providers have been identified as detailed in the report on capacity in February 2021<sup>5</sup>, and this updated list has been used for the purposes of this research. Residential rehabilitation was defined, as per the mapping report, as facilities offering programmes which aim to support individuals to attain an alcohol or drug-free lifestyle and be re-integrated into society, and which provide intensive psychosocial support and a structured programme of daily activities which residents are required to attend over a fixed period of time. The survey questions were designed to be able to provide a snapshot, at the time of completion, of the steps residential rehab providers in Scotland have taken to reduce COVID-19 infection within their facilities. Questions were developed in consultation with the short-life working group on Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Pathways (SLWG). This group consists of key individuals who are close to the provision of these services and representatives from the National COVID-19 Testing Programme.

The survey comprised of 17 questions (see Appendix B), including questions on COVID-19 testing, vaccination levels and procedures adopted around intake, isolation and visitors. In addition, the survey also asked a number of open text questions for more detail on responses. Service providers were asked to email back their response within a four day window. Due to the short timescales surrounding this work, providers who had not completed the survey were contacted by a member of the analytical team to ensure they had opportunity to be included in this research. As such, the survey was supplemented by a number of phone interviews.

Data was collected between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2021.

## 3. Main findings

### 3.1 Response rates

**Of the 20 residential rehab facilities surveyed, 17 replied<sup>6</sup>. Thirteen of the facilities provided residential treatment for both alcohol and drug addiction (76%), 3 provided treatment for drugs only (18%) and 1 provided treatment for alcohol only (6%).** Twelve (70%) of services were voluntary or not-for-profit, 2 facilities (12%) were privately funded, and 2 facilities (12%) were funded by the NHS. A full list of all rehab providers, including those who contributed to this analysis are provided in Appendix A.

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<sup>4</sup> [Residential rehabilitation - service mapping: report - 2019 to 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/residential-rehabilitation-service-mapping-report-2019-to-2020/pages/11.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> [Residential rehabilitation: status report on current levels of capacity - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/residential-rehabilitation-status-report-on-current-levels-of-capacity/pages/11.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> Whitchester House, Hebrides Alpha Project, Priory Hospital Glasgow were not able to provide data within the timeframe of the survey and so were not included in this report.

### 3.2 Testing of COVID-19

Of the facilities who provided a response to the survey, the vast majority (n = 16; 94%) reported testing of staff, however, only 8 (47%) reported testing of residents. Currently visitors are being tested at 5 facilities (29%), however a number of those not testing do not allow visitors within the facility. Of those who are currently allowing visitors (n=10), half reported testing visitors on arrival (n=5, 50%).

A mixed picture emerged across the rehab facilities around types of tests used, frequency and method of administration, processing and recording of test results. Facilities who reported the use of testing tended to use a combination of PCR and LFD testing which, for the most part, were administered as self-tests. Where carried out, PCR tests tended to be administered weekly and LFD twice weekly, and were mostly used for testing staff. Where carried out, tests were either self-processed or processed by nursing or admin staff at the facility. The process of recording results varied by facility and tended to be recorded both by the facilities themselves and on different external databases/ online portals.

The majority of facilities (82%) reported that they felt residents would be able to conduct supervised self-testing should this be deemed appropriate. Facilities who reported concerns around supervised self-testing noted that this was primarily due to staff capacity and available resources, as opposed to the ability of the resident to carry out the testing procedure themselves.

### 3.3 COVID-19 Vaccination estimates

At the time of survey, the vast majority of members of staff at residential rehab facilities had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination (86%). A total of 244 out of 284 members of staff had received their first COVID-19 vaccination across the residential rehab facilities who provided a response to this question at the time of the survey.<sup>7</sup> Of the facilities surveyed, on average, there was a 1:1 staff to resident ratio.<sup>8</sup>

At the time of survey, over half of residents currently living within a residential rehab facility had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination (57%). A total of 101 out of 177 residents had received their first COVID-19 vaccination across the residential rehab facilities who provided a response to this question at the time of the survey.<sup>9</sup>

The vast majority of facilities (94%) reported that they would be able to provide assistance should a resident need to be accompanied to their vaccination appointment.

All facilities made contact with residents prior to admission, with just under half (n= 8, 47%) reporting having a dedicated person who remains in contact with a new

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<sup>7</sup> Total staff in the 17 facilities surveyed was 298, however not all reported a number the total number vaccinated.

<sup>8</sup> This ranged from 1:1.8 (16 staff to 29 residents) to 1:0.2 (14 staff to 3 residents) across the facilities.

<sup>9</sup> Total residents in the 17 facilities surveyed was 239, however not all reported a number the total number vaccinated.

resident in the immediate period leading up to admission. The remaining facilities reported either having a team who maintains contact with the individual entering their program, have a single pre-admission appointment or failed to detail their specific pre-admission procedures.

#### 3.4 COVID-19 Isolation procedures

The majority of facilities (71%) surveyed reported isolating residents upon arrival. Of those adopting isolation protocols, a number of facilities reported that this was for either a period of 14 days, or until a negative PCR or two negative LFD tests were obtained. One facility noted that they had reduced their period of self-isolation to minimise the potentially negative impact this period has on an individual's recovery. This is due to the relative vulnerability of an individual in the period immediately after admission to rehab and increased likelihood of unplanned exit.

All facilities reported having specific isolation protocols in place in the event of a resident contracting COVID-19 whilst residing at their facility. Specific protocols varied but were focused around a period for self-isolation for 10-14 days and notifying track and trace teams.

#### 3.5 COVID-19 procedures around visitors

Ten facilities (59%) reported currently allowing visitors to their facility. Of these, some reported only allowing visitors to meet residents outdoors and only allowing limited numbers of pre-planned visitors per resident. Of those who reported that visitors are currently not allowed to their facility, some mentioned they did in exceptional circumstances allow for a limited number of pre-planned visitors deemed essential to the recovery and wellbeing of an individual as well as other essential maintenance staff, trades people and contactors to the facility.

All facilities reported adopting specific protocols around visitors to their facility. Specific protocols varied across different facilities but were focused on social distancing and making use of LFD testing, temperature checks, personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand washing procedures.

## Appendix A

### Residential Rehab Providers in Scotland

<b>Name</b>	<b>Health Board</b>	<b>Subtype</b>	<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Total beds</b>
Abbeycare (UK)	Lanarkshire	Alcohol & Drug	Private	34
Alternatives Safe As Houses	Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	36
Benaiah, Teen Challenge UK	Grampian	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	7
Bethany Christian Centre *	Lothian	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	18
Castle Craig Hospital	Borders	Alcohol & Drug	Private	110
CrossReach, Beechwood House	Highland	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	10
CrossReach, Glasgow Residential Recovery Service	Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	17
Hebrides Alpha Project**	Western Isles	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	6
Jericho Society, Dundee House	Tayside	Alcohol Only	Voluntary or Not for Profit	12
Jericho Society, Greenock Women's House	Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Drugs Only	Voluntary or Not for Profit	10
Jericho Society, Men's House	Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Drugs Only	Voluntary or Not for Profit	18
Kings Court, Maxie Richards Foundation	Argyll & Bute	Drugs Only	Voluntary or Not for Profit	5
Lothians & Edinburgh	Lothian	Alcohol & Drug	Statutory (NHS)	20

Abstinence Programme (LEAP)				
Phoenix Futures Scotland	Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	31
Priory Hospital Glasgow**	Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Alcohol & Drug	Private	9
River Garden Auchincruive	Ayrshire and Arran	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	7
Sunnybrae, Teen Challenge UK	Grampian	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	18
The Haven Kilmacolm	Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	24
Ward 5, Woodland View	Ayrshire and Arran	Alcohol & Drug	Statutory (NHS)	5
Whitchester House, Teen Challenge UK**	Borders	Alcohol & Drug	Voluntary or Not for Profit	21

\* Bethany Christian Centre only accepts individuals who were previously homeless, and so this service is not available to all people seeking residential treatment.

\*\* Whitchester House, Hebrides Alpha Project, Priory Hospital Glasgow were not able to provide data within the timeframe of the survey and so were not included in this report.

## Appendix B

### Testing of COVID-19

1. Is your facility currently testing staff?

Yes

No

Please provide details (optional)

Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Is your facility currently testing residents?

Yes

No

Please provide details (optional)

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Is your facility currently testing visitors?

Yes

No

Please provide details (optional)

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### **If any testing is being carried out at your facility:**

4. What type of tests do you use? (please select the most appropriate option)

**PCR**

(these tests are mostly conducted at official Test Sites, but are also available as a 'Home Kit', with results available within 48 hours)

Please provide details on how your facility arranged this (max 300 words)

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Lateral Flow (LFD)**

(sometimes called 'Antigen Tests', which give a test result in 30 minutes and are often self-administered)

Please provide details on how your facility arranged this (max 300 words)

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Both PCR and Lateral Flow**

Please provide details on when these different tests are used (max 300 words)

Click or tap here to enter text.

5. How are these tests administered? (please tick the most appropriate option(s))

**Lateral Flow (LFD)**

Assisted testing

(This is when trained operative carries out the swabbing, processing, reading and recording of the test)

Supervised self-test

(This is when the individual self-swabs under supervision, and the test is processed, read and recorded by a trained operative)

Self-test and Self Report

(This is when the individual self-swabs, process the test, interpret and submit test results themselves without any assistance, from a remote or central location)

**PCR**

Assisted testing

(This is when trained operatives carry out swabbing, ordering and dispatching of completed kits)

Supervised self-test

(This is when the individual self-swabs under supervision, and ordering and dispatching of completed kits is managed by trained operatives)

Self-test

(This is when individuals self-swab and manage the administration of the test themselves)

6. How often are tests carried out for residents, staff and visitors?

	<u>Residents</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Visitors</u>
On arrival (only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twice weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fortnightly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If 'other', please provide details

Click or tap here to enter text.

7. How are these tests processed at the facility once the test has been administered?
- Self-processed by the individual receiving the test
- Non-clinical staff
- Clinical staff
- Other
- If 'other', please provide details (optional)  
Click or tap here to enter text.
8. How are the results of tests administered at your facility currently recorded?  
Please provide details  
Click or tap here to enter text.
9. Irrespective of current testing practices, would **all** residents at your facility be able to do supervised self-testing? (This is when the individual self-swabs under supervision, and the test is processed, and read and recorded by a trained staff member)
- Yes
- No
- Please provide details (optional)  
Click or tap here to enter text.

### Isolation procedures

1. If so, are new residents self-isolated upon admission?
- All new residents
- Some residents
- We currently do not isolate new residents
- Please provide details  
Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Do you have specific protocols in place in the event of a resident contracting COVID-19 whilst living in the facility?
- Yes
- No
- Please provide details  
Click or tap here to enter text.

## COVID-19 Vaccinations

1. How many of your total number of staff have currently received their 1<sup>st</sup> COVID vaccination?

<u>Total number of staff</u> Click or tap here to enter text.	<u>Total staff vaccinated</u> Click or tap here to enter text.
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2. How many of your total number of residents have currently received their 1<sup>st</sup> COVID vaccination?

<u>Total number of residents</u> Click or tap here to enter text.	<u>Total residents vaccinated</u> Click or tap here to enter text.
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## Intake and Visitors

1. As part of your regular contact with individuals prior to admission, there may be a need to put in place bespoke arrangements to support these individuals to access their vaccine. How does your facility currently make contact, and remain in contact, with new residents in the days/weeks running up to the day of admission? Please detail if each new resident has a dedicated contact person.  
Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Should it be necessary for individuals already residing at your facility to be accompanied to their vaccination appointment, would a staff member from your facility be able to do this?  
Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Do you currently allow visitors to your facility?  
Yes   
No   
Please provide details  
Click or tap here to enter text.
4. What protocols do you have around visitors to your facility?  
Click or tap here to enter text.



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