

Chief Medical Officer

Dr Gregor Smith, Interim Chief Medical Officer

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Dear Colleague

## Enhanced Surveillance of COVID-19 in Scotland – Serology programme

I am writing to tell you that Public Health Scotland, on behalf of Scottish Government, has established a serology programme as part of our Enhanced Surveillance of COVID-19 in Scotland. The objective of this programme is to monitor the levels of exposure to COVID-19 infection in the Scottish population.

We have identified 3 main sources of blood to help us get a clear picture of the seroprevalence of COVID-19 across Scotland:

### 1. Primary care residual blood submitted to biochemistry for other investigations and captured at the point of discard.

The initial 16-week programme of data collection using the primary care samples from biochemistry and sent to Inverness concluded on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020. I would like to thank you for your participation to date. The data you have supplied has contributed to a sample size of over 16,000 samples reported.

It is very important that this programme continues to monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 infection and patient characteristics and funding has been committed until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Thus, we would be grateful if all Boards could continue with the collection of these bloods until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and continue to send to SMiRL, Inverness for testing and subsequent analysis at Public Health Scotland.

### 2. Antenatal booking bloods submitted at 12 weeks for virological testing.

We are now also requesting that Boards start antibody testing of their stored antenatal samples from January to August 2020 with the validated Covid platform they have in situ. This will only include those samples that have an adequate volume remaining for any future investigations. Testing of the antenatal samples subsequently collected from September to March 2021 will be performed at Western General Hospital in Edinburgh.

From the Interim Chief Medical Officer  
**Dr Gregor Smith**

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#### For action

Chief Executives NHS Boards  
Medical Directors NHS Boards  
Directors of Public Health  
Nurse Directors  
Directors of Dentistry  
NHS Boards Primary Care Leads  
NHS Boards Infectious Disease Consultants  
Consultant Physicians  
General Practitioners  
Practice Nurses  
CPHMs  
Accident and Emergency Departments  
Occupational Health Departments  
Virology Laboratories  
Travel Clinics  
Directors of Pharmacy  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
NHS 24  
Public Health Scotland

#### Further Enquiries to:

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Enhanced Surveillance Cell  
E: [phs.hpsscoronavirus@nhs.net](mailto:phs.hpsscoronavirus@nhs.net)

### **3. Paediatric plasma or serum samples sent to blood sciences from A&E, OPD and other primary care settings.**

We also would like to request that laboratories begin testing the paediatric blood samples that have been sent to blood sciences for analysis and captured at the point of discard. This will continue until the end of March 2021.

#### **Resourcing and finance**

We are aware of the burden this request places on laboratories especially as they are beginning to see a return to business as usual. To assist we can confirm that Ministers have agreed to fund the costs associated with this work until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 on the basis that these costs are confirmed to be additional to existing funded services.

You should work with your finance teams to ensure that any additional costs are reflected within the financial plans submitted regularly to Scottish Government supporting your local mobilisation process. We are also aware that in order to begin this work, labs may need to secure additional staffing, possibly by extending current staff contracts or commitments to paying staff overtime, and would encourage you to begin this process as soon as possible to mitigate any delays.

Many thanks for your continued support in all aspects of enhanced surveillance. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact Rebekah Carton by email at [Rebekah.carton@gov.scot](mailto:Rebekah.carton@gov.scot) and she will deal with your query.

Yours sincerely

*Gregor Smith*

**DR GREGOR SMITH**

Interim Chief Medical Officer