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Exec Summary

NHS Grampian is implementing the Scottish Government’s enhanced measures to support the care home sector as they continue to operate against the background risk of the continued presence of SARS-CoV-2. The measures are testing for all care home residents and staff in the event of a confirmed case (“whole-home testing”), surveillance testing of care home residents in facilities with no known cases of COVID-19 (“surveillance testing”), and weekly staff testing for all care home staff (“weekly staff testing”).

These measures enhance existing arrangements to provide immediate testing for any resident or staff member should they develop symptoms associated with COVID-19 infection; to test all hospital inpatients before discharge to a care home; to test anyone in the community before they are admitted to a care home; and to provide weekly testing for any health and social care staff being deployed or visiting a care home to provide care or treatment.

Whole-home testing is coordinated by NHS Grampian Health Protection Team and has been tried and tested with over twenty facilities in Grampian since April.

Surveillance testing for care home residents is being conducted on a rolling programme. All residents in all care homes are offered testing by NHS Grampian as part of this programme. Care home residents will continue to be able to access immediate testing in the event of symptom development.

Weekly staff testing is delivered through the UK Government testing programme. (Care home staff continue to be able to access immediate testing from NHS

Grampian in the event of symptom development.) Care Homes are ordering testing kits for their staff each week, which are collected by courier for delivery to the national Lighthouse Laboratory in Glasgow.

NHS Grampian, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Aberdeenshire HSCP, and Health and Social Care Moray use their existing daily communications with care homes to support all these measures.

Introduction

Despite the success of the societal lockdown in suppressing transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus which causes COVID-19 disease) within the Scottish and Grampian populations, the risk of resurgence has not been eradicated. Even as the lockdown is lifted in line with the Scottish Government's route map, three broad sets of restrictions will remain in force. These relate to physical distancing, infection prevention and control (IPC; 'hygiene measures'), and isolation and quarantine (including contact tracing). No single measure is as effective in isolation as when applied in combination together.

Testing for SARS-CoV-2 is an important component of more than one measure. As well as its importance for diagnostic and treatment pathway purposes, being able to confirm infection in individuals with symptoms associated with COVID-19 allows them to (be) isolate(d) in a timely manner, and for their contacts to be quarantined, thereby breaking chains of transmission. Given the knowledge that SARS-CoV-2 can be detected in people with atypical and oligosymptomatic presentations, Grampian's health and social care staff have been encouraged to seek testing for a broader range of symptoms than the general public. And as clinical and care settings have endeavoured to maintain a COVID-19-free environment there has been a growth in testing asymptomatic people in an effort to detect occult infection amongst patients, residents and staff.

Context

The Scottish Government has introduced three enhanced measures to support the care home sector as they continue to operate against the background risk of the continued presence of SARS-CoV-2.

The three enhanced measures are testing for all care home residents and staff in the event of a confirmed case ("whole-home testing"), surveillance testing of care home residents in facilities with no known cases of COVID-19 ("surveillance testing"), and weekly staff testing for all care home staff ("asymptomatic staff testing").

NHS Grampian Testing Policy

NHS Grampian's SARS-CoV-2 Testing Policy¹ differentiates between nucleic acid detection tests and antibody tests. The latter remain unavailable at the time of writing. (The availability of, and eligibility for, testing is kept up to date on the NHS

¹ <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NHSG-SARS-CoV-2-Testing-Policy-1.pdf>

Grampian COVID-19 website² and Clinical Guidance Intranet (CGI.) Testing in the current document is taken to refer to nucleic acid detection testing, using real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to detect the presence of SARS-Cov-2 in a biological sample (usually a combined throat and nose swab). The Testing Policy sets out the policy position in relation to clinical (symptomatic) testing, asymptomatic (screening) testing, public health testing, and staff testing. The Testing Policy is supplemented by a range of written materials, pathways and algorithms maintained on the NHS Grampian COVID-19 website and CGI.

Testing Provision in Grampian

NHS Grampian existing PCR testing provision

Care home residents

Care homes can arrange immediate PCR testing for symptomatic residents.³ Care homes with a confirmed case of COVID-19 have whole-home PCR testing undertaken.⁴ All hospital inpatients are offered PCR testing before discharge to a care home.⁵ All individuals in the community are offered PCR testing before they are admitted to a care home.

Care home staff

All care home staff and their household members can access immediate testing by NHS Grampian.⁶ Self-isolation and testing are recommended in the event of fever, chills, dry or productive cough, sore throat, headache, runny nose, shortness of breath, general weakness, muscle pain, diarrhoea, or loss of taste/smell. Symptomatic staff with a Not Detected (“negative”) result are able to return to work when they are better, with no fever for 48 hours, even if this is less than seven days since their symptoms began. Asymptomatic staff with a symptomatic household member are able to return to work immediately if the household member receives a Not Detected (“negative”) result, as long as they themselves remain asymptomatic.

NHS and HSCP staff visiting or deployed to care homes

PCR testing arrangements are in place for all health and social care staff making clinical visits to, or deployed to work in, any care home or very sheltered housing complex.⁷ The aim of testing asymptomatic staff is to detect asymptomatic, pre-symptomatic or oligosymptomatic infections, allowing early isolation and reducing the

² <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/for-nhs-grampian-staff/covid-19-testing-policy/>

³ <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Care-Home-Resident-Testing-Flow-Chart.pdf>

⁴ <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Care-Home-Testing-Pathway.pdf>

⁵ <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Hospital-to-Discharge-Covid-Testing-Pathway-3.pdf>

⁶ <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/for-nhs-grampian-staff/staff-covid-19-testing/>

⁷ <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NHSG-HSCP-Staff-Care-Home-Visiting-Testing-Pathway.pdf>

risk of nosocomial transmission. Staff who receive a Detected (“positive”) result follow the online NHS Grampian “Positive Results Flowchart”.⁸

NHS Grampian enhanced measures PCR testing provision

NHS Grampian will continue to provide whole-home PCR testing in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19. NHS Grampian Health Protection Team coordinate whole home testing as part of an IMT. NHS Grampian testing service, set up as part of the COVID-19 response, provide electronic test labels for all residents being tested, and care home staff are supported to take the swabs. Training materials have been made available, and direct assistance is available from HSCP community nursing teams. The testing service also provide drive-through or pop-up testing facilities to allow all staff to be tested.

NHS Grampian will provide surveillance PCR testing for all residents in all care homes on a rolling programme basis. The NHS Grampian testing service makes telephone contact with each care home one week in advance of testing. Electronic test labels are provided for all residents, and care home staff are supported to take the swabs. Training materials have been made available, and direct assistance is available from HSCP community nursing teams.

UK Government enhanced measures PCR testing programme provision

Weekly PCR testing for all care home staff will be provided through the UK Government testing programme social care portal. NHS Grampian will coordinate the support provided to care homes as they implement this programme.

Laboratory arrangements in Grampian

Biological samples taken by NHS Grampian are analysed by the microbiology laboratories at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI). Biological samples taken through the UK Government testing programme are analysed at the nation Lighthouse laboratory in Glasgow.

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary

All biological samples taken by NHS Grampian clinical staff or testing service staff are sent to the ARI laboratory. PCR analysis is currently undertaken by the medical microbiology laboratory at ARI, and by capacity provided by the University of Aberdeen Genetics Laboratory. Total daily testing capacity is 2,002 tests per day.

A detailed breakdown of testing capacity is set out in the table below.

⁸ <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Asymptomatic-staff-weekly-testing-Positive-Results-Flowchart.pdf>

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Laboratory Daily PCR COVID-19 testing capacity		
EXTRACTION	PCR	3-5 runs/ day
Nimbus	Seegene-CFX	200
QIA-Cube HT (Qiagen)	Altona-ABI or Seegene-CFX	368
EasyMag	Altona-ABI or Seegene-CFX	264
ABBOTT m2000		282
<i>ARI Daily Capacity</i>		<i>1114</i>
Kingfisher	Altona-ABI	888
<i>UoA / Genetics Laboratory Daily Capacity</i>		<i>888</i>
TOTAL ARI DAILY CAPACITY		2002

Lighthouse laboratory

All biological samples taken via the UK Government testing programme, whether at Aberdeen Airport or through testing kits ordered online, are sent to the Lighthouse laboratory. Aberdeen Airport offers testing to any symptomatic individual who is aged five or over. All Detected (“positive”) test results from the Lighthouse laboratory are notified to NHS Grampian for contact tracing purposes.

Testing capacity versus testing demand

NHS Grampian

NHS Grampian Health Intelligence provide a real-time data dashboard monitoring PCR testing activity in Grampian. An extract is provided in Annex 1. Over the past 14 days the mean number of PCR tests being submitted for analysis at ARI has been 302 per day, representing 15% of the ARI daily testing capacity. This data has been collected while whole-home testing and surveillance testing has been live, and so includes this activity.

UK Government Social Care Portal

NHS Grampian’s weekly PCR test allocation through the social care portal is 8,750. Based on telephone conversations with every care home in scope for weekly staff testing, the estimated headcount is 5,700. This provides additional capacity of over 3,000 test kits for any additional residential care facilities identified as eligible during ongoing verification processes, and for any underestimate in the staffing headcount.

Implementation Plan

The BCE letter of 28 May 2020 sets out the requirement for whole-home testing and surveillance testing to apply to care homes for older people. Subsequent email communication from Scottish Government has clarified that weekly testing for asymptomatic staff applies to “all adult care homes” excluding very sheltered housing.

NHS Grampian’s original whole-home testing approach included very/ sheltered housing and other residential facilities. The approach has been used successfully with over twenty care homes and very sheltered housing facilities in Grampian to

date. In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 whole-home testing in Grampian has been proven to be able to be implemented without delay. This approach will be maintained.

NHS Grampian includes very sheltered housing in its surveillance testing programme. NHS Grampian is providing testing on a rolling programme basis. All residents in the facilities in scope each week are offered the opportunity of a test. The rolling programme is set out in Annex 2. Care home residents continue to be able to access immediate NHS Grampian testing in the event of symptom development.

Care homes are accessing the social care portal to provide testing kits for asymptomatic care home staff. Care home staff continue to be able to access immediate NHS Grampian testing in the event of symptom development.

An action plan is attached as Annex 3.

Communication Plan

Whole-home testing is coordinated by NHS Grampian Health Protection Team in the event of a resident or staff member being notified as a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 infection. Health Protection and the HSCP safety huddles will continue to communicate with all care homes about this policy element, so that care homes understand what will happen if they have a confirmed case.

Surveillance testing plans have been communicated to all care home managers in writing. Managers have been advised that one week prior to a care home's programmed testing the NHS Grampian testing team will telephone the care home manager and explain the programme and the process to be followed.

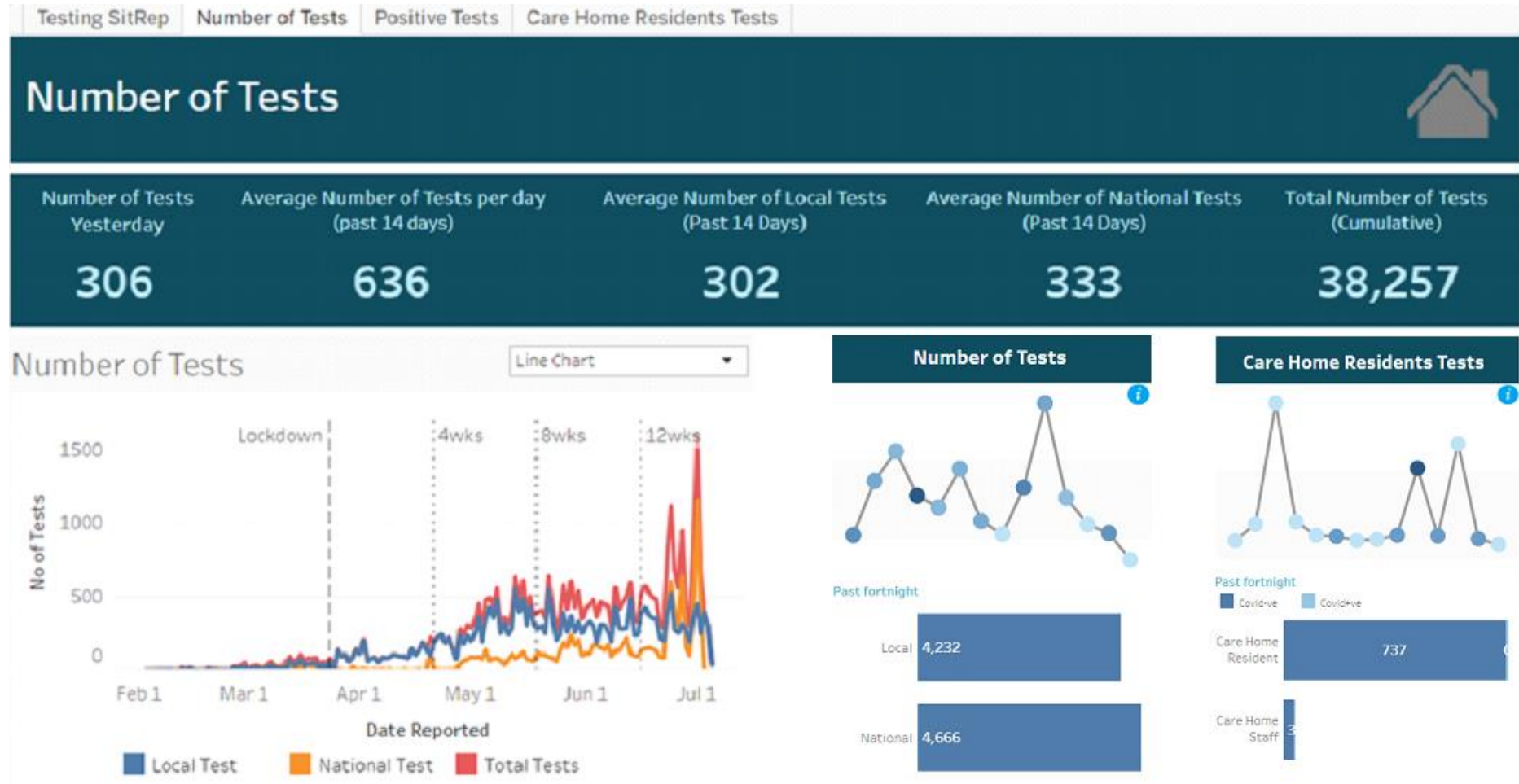
Weekly staff testing has been communicated by email, individual telephone calls to all care homes, and through question and answer sessions at HSCP provider forums. NHS Grampian Health Protection Team, Aberdeen City HSCP, Aberdeenshire HSCP, and Health and Social Care Moray have established daily telephone communications with all care homes in Grampian, which are being used to provide real-time support.

Reporting arrangements

NHS Grampian Health Intelligence collate the data required for the weekly Scottish Government reporting template. Data are collected through daily HSCP telephone calls to all care homes. HSCPs provide this data in a weekly return to NHS Grampian Health Intelligence. NHS Grampian Health Intelligence collate these data returns, along with laboratory testing data, and complete the template for the Board Chief Executive to approve prior to its delivery to Scottish Government.

Annex 1 PCR Testing Data Dashboard Extract

NHS Grampian Health Intelligence provide a real-time data dashboard monitoring PCR testing activity in Grampian. The extract below was taken on 05 July 2020 at 10:24 and shows the mean number of PCR tests being submitted for analysis at ARI as 302 per day. This represents 15% of the ARI daily testing capacity.



Annex 2 Surveillance testing rolling programme

Please note that these schedules are subject to change. Care homes requiring whole-home testing in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be given priority for testing, which may require changes to the schedule of testing for care homes with no known cases. The surveillance testing programme covers 103 care homes for older people and very sheltered housing facilities.

Aberdeen City HSCP Care Home surveillance plan

Testing on Monday of given week

Care Home	Total	Week	Date
Deeside(68) <u>Angusfield</u> (40) Ashley House(12) Simeon(23)	143	1	15/06/2020
<u>Hanewith</u> (60) <u>Ruthrieston</u> (41) Crosby House(39)	140	2	22/06/2020
Grandholm(79) Cowdry(34) Summerhill(22) Fairley Den(32)	167	3	29/06/2020
Rosewell(60) Kingswood Court(55) Kingswells(28) <u>Maryfield West</u> (25)	168	4	06/07/2020
<u>Tor-na-Dee</u> (74) <u>Balnagask</u> (30) Woodside(23) <u>Deeview Court</u> (22)	149	5	13/07/2020
Rubislaw(66) Laurels Lodge(45) Fergus House(43)	154	6	20/07/2020
Jesmond(65) Cranford House(39) <u>Parsley Castle</u> (41)	145	7	27/07/2020
Northcote(60) <u>Denmore Court</u> (51) Eastleigh(35)	146	8	03/08/2020
Torry(78) <u>Hawkhill</u> (41) Riverside(42)	161	9	10/08/2020
Fairview(102) <u>Clasieknowe</u> (20) <u>Berryden Mills</u> (7) <u>Ardeer House</u> (10)	139	10	17/08/2020

Aberdeenshire HSCP Care Home surveillance plan

Testing on Tuesday of week

Care Home	Total	Week	Date
<u>Crimmond</u> (N52) <u>Auchtercrag</u> (C71) <u>Clasfarguhar</u> (S21) <u>Havencourt</u> (S42)	186	1	16/06/2020
<u>Culsh House</u> (N21) Garioch (C37) Balhousie (S60) Castle Lodge (S21)	162	2	23/06/2020
<u>Wyndwell</u> (N30) Allandale (N32) <u>Presmohr</u> (C29) Balmedie House (C34) <u>Inchmarlo</u> (S51)	176	3	30/06/2020
Dooocot (N28) Abbey Court (N22) <u>Allachburn</u> (C30) <u>Overdon</u> (C18) <u>Craigard</u> (S21) Mowat Court (S45)	164	4	07/07/2020
Jarvis Court (N19) School Park (N5) <u>Ythanvale</u> (C30) Westbank (C33) <u>KirkLodge</u> (S17) Burnside (S57)	161	5	14/07/2020
<u>Lythe</u> (N24) <u>Kirkburn</u> (N59) Bellfield (S34) <u>Drumdarroch</u> (C41)	158	6	21/07/2020
Banff(N56) St Modans (N63) Alexander Scotts(S40) <u>Bonnyton House</u> (C14)	173	7	28/07/2020
<u>GrangePark</u> (N34) <u>Edenholme</u> (C60) Annesley House (S36) <u>KirkLodge</u> (S21)	151	8	04/08/2020
<u>Durnhythe</u> (N35) <u>Faithlie</u> (N35) Dawson Court (40) <u>Pitmurchie</u> (S30)	140	9	11/08/2020
Bayview(N30) <u>Alastrean</u> (S51) <u>Dalvenie Gardens</u> (S25) <u>Badenscoth</u> (C26) <u>Pleyfau</u> (S31)	163	10	18/08/2020
<u>Dounemount</u> (N34) Windmill Court (N46) <u>Lethen Park</u> (S52) Pitcairn(C51)	184	11	25/08/2020
<u>Kynnaid</u> (N41) The Grove (C40) <u>Bennachie</u> (C48) <u>Meadows</u> (S43)	172	12	01/09/2020

N: North C: Central S: South




Annex 2 Surveillance testing rolling programme

Moray HSCP Care Home surveillance plan

Testing on a Wednesday

Care Home	Total	Week	Date
The Grove(62) Elgin	62	1	17/06/2020
Spynie (56) Elgin	56	2	24/07/2020
Netherha (33) Buckie Cathay(41) Forres	74	3	01/07/2020
Andersons (53) Elgin	53	4	08/07/2020
Parklands (46) Buckie	46	5	15/07/2020
Speyside (40) Aberlour Birchview (4)	44	6	22/07/2020
Weston View (40) Keith Wakefield (30) Buckie	70	7	29/07/2020
Abbeyvale (51) Elgin	51	8	05/08/2020
Glenisla (42) Keith Abbeyside (24) Elgin	66	9	12/08/2020
Meadowlark(57) - Forres	57	10	19/08/2020

Annex 3 Action plan

BCE Letter: 28 May 2020		
Deadline for initial implementation plan: 29 May 2020		
Cabinet Secretary Direction: 04 June 2020		
Deadline for submission of weekly plan: 05 June 2020		
Refined version of final implementation plan: 05 July 2020		
Whole-home testing		
Whole home testing commenced in Grampian in April 2020		Complete
A written protocol was developed and published in May 2020		Complete
Confirm care homes and very sheltered housing (VSH) in scope		Complete
Liaise with ARI laboratory about demand and capacity		Complete
The process has been successfully used with 21 care homes and VSH facilities to date		Complete
HSCP and Health Protection Team daily telephone calls and safety huddles continue to provide advice and guidance to care homes about what will happen in the event of a confirmed case		Complete
Surveillance testing		
Confirm and verify care homes and VSH in scope		Complete
Develop a rolling programme of surveillance testing		Complete
Liaise with ARI laboratory about demand and capacity		Complete
Communicate the programme to all care home and VSH managers		Complete
Commence surveillance testing and refine process based on experience		Complete
Weekly staff testing		
Confirm and verify care homes in scope		In progress
	Care homes for older adults	Complete
	Care homes for adults	Complete
	Other residential facilities which could be included in scope	In progress
Communicate the requirement for weekly staff testing to all care home managers		Complete
Provide Scottish Government guidance about the Social Care Portal to all care home managers		Complete
Develop local HSCP materials to support care home managers with implementation of weekly staff testing		In progress
Provide opportunities for Q&A sessions at HSCP provider forum meetings		Complete
Include weekly staff testing as a subject during daily 'safety huddle' telephone calls to all care homes		Complete
Data reporting		
Provide each HSCP with a template to collate the required weekly data		Complete
Configure safety huddle daily telephone calls to all care homes to collect required data for the weekly reporting template		Complete
Provide a single email address for HSCP weekly daily returns		Complete
Health intelligence complete the weekly reporting template based on HSCP returns and laboratory data every Monday, and send to Chief Executive for approval and submission to Scottish Government		Complete
KEY		
	Complete	 In progress
		 Deferred