

The Coronavirus National Testing Programme

Whole home testing for care home staff and residents

This document outlines the testing provision for residents and staff in care homes. This testing approach applies in England only. We are working with the Devolved Administrations to explore and support their needs around adult social care testing. We recognise that each Devolved Administration will have its own testing priorities in their nation, however we are working closely to align our approaches.

Who can register care homes for whole home testing?

Registered care home managers can register online to request coronavirus test kits for their care home. They can register online to all residents and care home staff.

Local Directors of Public Health and their representatives can also refer local care homes.

Tests will be available to all care homes over time, but this service is currently available to those which look after older people or people with dementia.

Who can get tested using this testing provision?

Care home residents with and without symptoms and care home workers **without symptoms** can be tested within the care home.

Any care home workers with symptoms should be self-isolating and can access testing via the [self-referral portal](#)

Why just care homes for older people?

On the 28th April, increases in testing capacity meant that eligibility could be expanded to more groups at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and/or of suffering worse outcomes if they did. This included anyone over 65 and symptomatic, as they are at higher risk of adverse consequences if they get the disease.

Health and social care workers, NHS patients and care home residents can have tests even if they are asymptomatic, as they are at higher risk of contracting the disease due to their regular close contact with potentially infectious individuals.

This service will be rolled out to all care homes in a phased approach. This service will be expanded to other types of registered adult social care settings as soon as possible.

How do care homes register online?

Care homes can register for testing by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>. They will need their Care Quality Commission registration number and will be asked to confirm the number of residents and staff in the care home.

Local Authorities registering on behalf of a care home will also need to provide the CQC care home registration number, numbers of residents and staff, and also their details as the referrer.

What is the role of Public Health England Health Protection Teams? Does this testing provision replace them?

The first time a care home suspects a resident has symptoms, the care home manager should contact their local Public Health England (PHE) Health Protection Team (HPT). The HPT will arrange for the testing of all symptomatic residents at this point, as well as providing locally tailored infection control advice.

Beyond the initial outbreak, the Department for Health and Social Care can provide further testing for all care home residents and workers.

Who will perform the tests on staff and residents?

For residents – Detailed instructions on administering tests to residents is available will be provided to care homes. Everyone who will be involved in administering tests should watch this [instruction video](#).

For staff - The test kits are self-administered meaning staff can perform the tests on themselves. Test kits come with detailed instructions on how to use them. You can also refer to this helpful video on [self-administering swabs](#).

Will the test kits come with personal protective equipment (PPE)?

No. The testing offer provides test kits only. Care homes are asked to follow the [current guidance](#) from Public Health England on how to work safely in care homes and this video on [putting on and removing PPE](#).

Tests should not be conducted without the correct PPE.

How will care homes get the results?

Results will be communicated as soon as possible. Results for residents will be passed to their respective care home manager to enable them to notify the resident, their family, and GP (if appropriate). The test results will also be fed back to PHE to inform any follow up actions required, and to build up our understanding of the prevalence of the virus in care homes across England.

We are urgently working to put in place the necessary arrangements to share data from the testing programme with Local Authorities to help them manage coronavirus in the local area.

Who should care homes contact for further support and guidance?

If you have questions about your test kit registration, you can contact the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre on 0300 303 2713. It is open from 07:00 to 23:00 every day.