



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

## THE CORONAVIRUS NATIONAL TESTING PROGRAMME

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document contains the most commonly asked questions about the National Testing Programme. It's intended to support colleagues and stakeholders actively involved in the delivery of the programme and those who advise and communicate to stakeholders and the wider public about testing.

The FAQs are updated by the Operations Hub within the National Testing Programme Team. Updated versions are sent out on a regular basis. If you have questions about the FAQs, please contact [opshubs@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:opshubs@dhsc.gov.uk)

Please note that the testing approach outlined in this document applies to England, Scotland and Northern Ireland only. We are working closely with the Devolved Administrations on the approach to testing, and this includes working with them on appropriate solutions for booking into their testing sites. Decisions about eligibility for testing are made by the Devolved Administration and links to those criteria are included below.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### SECTION ONE – WHO CAN GET TESTED

#### 1. What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

A new continuous cough and/or a high temperature. For more information, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms-and-what-to-do/>

#### 2. What is the purpose of being tested?

Getting tested is important to understand if you, or a member of your household has coronavirus, so that you will know what steps to take to look after yourself, protect others and know if you are fit to return to work and reduce the spread of the virus.

The test will tell you if you currently have the virus. It will not tell you if you have previously had the virus.

Testing does not replace your clinical care, and if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition worsens, or your symptoms do not get better after seven days, then use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

#### 3. Who can get tested for coronavirus?

Our priority is testing patients to inform their clinical diagnosis. As per the Health Secretary's announcement on 28 April 2020, the following categories of individuals can also get tested:

- all essential workers including NHS and social care workers with symptoms (see full list of [essential workers](#))
- anyone over 65 with symptoms
- anyone with symptoms whose work cannot be done from home (for example construction workers, shop workers, emergency plumbers and delivery drivers)
- anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus that lives with those identified above.

Additionally, we're testing:

- social care workers and residents in care homes (with or without symptoms) both to investigate outbreaks and as part of a rolling programme to test all care homes
- NHS workers and patients without symptoms, in line with NHS England guidance.

This means anyone in one of these groups can find out whether they have the virus. Testing is most effective within three days of symptoms developing, although testing is considered effective until day five. No testing should be undertaken after day five, unless it's for a specific reason agreed on a case by case basis. Please note that these lists apply to England

only. The full list of eligible essential workers can be found here: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested)

Devolved Administrations operate their own eligibility criteria. See information on:

- [Scotland](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Wales](#)

#### **4. Why have these people been chosen as eligible, what is the logic behind the government's approach in deciding who can have a test?**

On testing, we've had to prioritise while we work at pace to build up testing capacity. Ministers took the decision early on that seriously ill patients had to come first, followed by those working on the frontline to support the sick and the most vulnerable. For these people, a test can mean the difference between life and death.

This is why our phased testing approach was so important because we started with patients, then NHS and social care staff, and then expanded to a wider list of essential workers.

But our ultimate goal is that anyone who needs a test should have one.

We are now able to expand further to ensure that even asymptomatic care home residents and workers, as well as asymptomatic NHS workers and patients where there is a clinical or public health need, can have a test. While those who are over 65, those who go into work because they cannot work from home, or those who live with an individual who is eligible for a test, can now get a test if they are symptomatic.

#### **5. Why can't more people get tested if they don't have symptoms?**

The test is most effective for those who are experiencing coronavirus symptoms. It only checks if you have coronavirus right now. The test will give you confidence to decide whether you are safe to return to work if you don't have the virus, or to remain in isolation if you test positive for coronavirus.

Health and care workers are in a different position, as they are in persistent close contact with a constantly changing number of potentially infectious people. This puts them at higher risk of infection, and this is why we have extended testing to them regardless of whether they have symptoms, because doing this will help protect the people they care for. We recognise that some of these people may feel exposed and therefore want the opportunity to get tested.

#### **6. If I am asymptomatic and test negative, does this mean I don't have the virus?**

A positive result from an asymptomatic test is accurate, whilst a negative one is much less so. If you are asymptomatic, the test can confirm you *have* the virus, but cannot confirm that you do *not* have it. If you test negative but go on to develop symptoms, you should immediately follow the [national guidance](#).

**7. How often can I be tested if I am asymptomatic?**

We are rapidly building and analysing the evidence around the benefits and timescales of repeat testing. Presently, we would expect targeted repeat testing where there are outbreaks and evidence of sustained transmission.

**8. I am asymptomatic and self-isolating because a family member has symptoms. I have tested negative. Can I go back to work?**

It depends on the results of your household member(s)' tests. If they all test negative, you can return to work. If any of them test positive, you should continue to self-isolate and follow government guidelines.

**9. Who qualifies for asymptomatic testing?**

We are expanding testing to asymptomatic residents and staff in care homes and staff in the NHS. **This is being rolled out in England only.** This means anyone who is working or living in a care home or working in the NHS can access testing, whether they have symptoms or not.

The expanded provision for care workers will be met through increased satellite testing provision and the deployment of Mobile Test Units.

**10. When should I or my household member(s) be tested?**

You should be tested in the first three days of coronavirus symptoms appearing, although testing is considered effective up until day five. No testing should be undertaken after day five, unless it's for a specific reason which will be agreed on a case by case basis by local microbiologists. This is because the test is considered most accurate in the first three days of symptoms.

If you are self-isolating because a person you live with has symptoms, you can refer them for testing. By testing the household member(s), we can be much more certain that you should either be self-isolating or can return to work.

**11. Why are you testing over 65s? What about other vulnerable groups who are shielding?**

Over 65s are particularly vulnerable to coronavirus, and it is important that we identify patients early so, where necessary, we can give them the right treatment and maximise their chances of recovery. As capacity increases, we will look to extend testing more widely still, including to those groups currently shielding. Vulnerable individuals currently advised to shield should continue to do so, and to seek medical advice if they develop symptoms.

Testing does not replace your clinical care, and if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition worsens, or your symptoms do not get better after seven days, then use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

## 12. Can my child get a test?

If an eligible individual is self-isolating due to an under-18 in the household showing coronavirus symptoms, then the child is eligible for a test.

Children aged 12-17 can use the test themselves or have their parent or guardian perform the test. Children aged 5-11 must have the test performed by a parent or guardian.

**Test kits are unsuitable for under-fives.** Call 111 if you're worried about a baby or child. If they seem very unwell, are getting worse, or you think there's something seriously wrong, call 999. Do not delay getting help if you're worried. Trust your instincts. You can find further information on the NHS guidance <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Whilst all sites offer testing to 12-17 year olds, unfortunately, not all test centres are able to accept children aged 5-11 right now, but we are working hard to expand this service across all test centres as fast as we can. The regional test sites that currently offer tests to 5-11 year olds are below. This list will be updated regularly.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Aberdeen Airport                               | Londonderry, Derry City Rugby Club          |
| Belfast, Odyssey Arena                         | London, Edmonton Lee Valley Athletics Park  |
| Birmingham, Midland Met Hospital               | London, Greenwich O2                        |
| Bournemouth, Creekmore Park and Ride           | London, NHS Nightingale                     |
| Brighton, AMEX Stadium                         | London, Twickenham                          |
| Bristol Airport                                | Manchester, Etihad Stadium                  |
| Cardiff City Football Club                     | Milton Keynes, South Second Street Car Park |
| Coventry Ricoh Arena                           | Oxford, Thornhill Park and Ride             |
| Ebbsfleet International Car Park D             | Penrith Rugby Club                          |
| Edinburgh Airport                              | Peterborough, East of England Showground    |
| Exeter, Honiton Park and Ride                  | Portsmouth, Tipnor Lorry Park               |
| Gatwick Airport                                | Portsmouth, Tipnor Lorry Park               |
| Hull, Humber Bridge Car Park                   | Sheffield, Doncaster Airport                |
| Inverness, University of Highlands and Islands | Stansted Airport                            |
| Ipswich, Copdock London Road Park and Ride     | Worcester, Sixways Stadium                  |
| Lincoln, Lincolnshire County Showground        | York, Poppleton Bar Park and Ride           |

## 13. I meet the eligibility criteria and need a test but I don't have a car. How can I get tested?

Home test kits are now available. You order them via the Self-Referral Portal and Amazon deliver the kit to your home. You perform the test on yourself following the detailed instructions that come with the kit. Royal Mail couriers will collect your sample and you will receive the results within 72 hours. You can order up to four test kits for your household. Currently, this testing offer applies in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland only.

**14. I'm based in Scotland/Wales but I live closer to test sites in England OR I travel into England for work. Can I use a test site closer to home/near work?**

Where eligible individuals are based in one nation, if they are able to safely access a test site in another then they may do so, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements for that test site. However, we would discourage anyone from travelling an excessive distance to do so, particularly if they are feeling very unwell.

**15. What will the test tell me?**

The test will confirm if an individual who is showing symptoms of the virus currently *has* it. It will not confirm whether they *have had* it and have now recovered. Like any diagnostic test however, there is always the *small* possibility of a false negative or a false positive result.

Eligible workers with negative results should only return to work if they feel well enough to do so. If everyone with symptoms who was tested in their household receive a negative result, the individual can return to work immediately, providing they are well enough, and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If a household member tests positive, but the eligible worker tests negative, the worker can return to work on day eight from the start of their symptoms if they feel well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If the eligible worker does not have symptoms but a household member tests positive, the worker should continue to self-isolate in line with [national guidance](#)

Eligible workers should discuss their return to work with their employer, following the steps outlined in the [Flowchart describing return to work following a SARS-CoV-2 test](#).

If, after returning to work, they later develop symptoms they should follow [national guidance](#) and self-isolate.

If any member of the household receives a positive result, please continue to follow the [national guidance](#).

**16. How does the test work?**

The test involves taking a swab of the throat and nose. A single swab is used to collect a sample from the back of your throat and your nose. This swab is then placed into a sample tube and securely packaged, where it is sent to the lab for testing. Depending on where you get tested, you will either have a trained member of our team take your swab or you will do it yourself.

**17. Why is it ok to take a single swab?**

Providing satisfactory samples are taken from both the back of the throat and the nose, a single swab is perfectly adequate and consistent with Public Health England guidance on appropriate collection of samples of this type.

**18. Does the test hurt? How long does it take?**

You may experience some mild discomfort, but it should not hurt. How long it takes depends slightly on the person, but it is a quick process and is usually completed within a matter of minutes.

**19. When and how will people receive their results?**

When you take your test, you will be told how your result will be passed to you. This may be by email or by text or both. We are aiming to return results within 48 hours of tests taken at regional test sites and 72 hours for home tests.

**20. Who do I contact if I don't understand my test results?**

If you do not understand your test result, you can contact the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre on 0300 303 2713. Please note that the call centre cannot provide clinical advice. If you are concerned about your health and wellbeing following your test result, or if your condition gets worse, or does not get better after 7 days, use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

**21. What do I do if I haven't received my test results?**

If you haven't received your result, please call the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre on 0300 303 2713. You should continue to apply the national guidance on self-isolation while waiting for your result in accordance with [national guidance](#). If you have followed this guidance and your self-isolation period has completed, you can return to work.

**22. If I test negative, and then later I develop symptoms, can I get tested again?**

Yes. If you are experiencing coronavirus symptoms, your employer may refer you again to be tested or you can book a test yourself via the self-referral portal.

**23. If you previously tested positive for coronavirus and have another episode of symptoms, do you need to self-isolate again?**

If you are usually healthy and your first illness was so severe you were prioritised for a coronavirus test and the result was positive, you will probably have developed some short-term immunity to coronavirus. Your new symptoms are very unlikely to be due to coronavirus in the current outbreak and therefore you and your household do not need to isolate.

However, if another person in your household develops symptoms and they have not previously tested positive for coronavirus, then they need to isolate along with all other members of the household except for you (as you have already tested positive).



If you are concerned about your new possible coronavirus symptoms (a new, continuous cough or a high temperature), use the 111-coronavirus service <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> or call NHS 111.

For up to the minute information for households with possible coronavirus, please refer to the [national guidance](#)

#### **24. How reliable is the test? How accurate is the test?**

The test is reliable and effective. There are different tests in use under this programme and all have been assessed as performing to manufacturer's specifications before being used. In addition, the newly established Lighthouse laboratories that will undertake the majority of the tests have been reviewed by experts as part of their set up and each has a clinical virology lead.

Like any diagnostic test however, there is always the *small* possibility of a false negative or a false positive result.

#### **25. I have further questions about my test, who else can I speak to?**

Eligible workers and individuals who have booked a test can contact the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre on 0300 303 2713 for assistance. The call centre is open daily from 08:00-20:00.

#### **26. How will my personal information be handled? Will my employer have access to my results?**

Your results are only communicated to you. It is for you to choose if you want to discuss your results with your employer.

We will not agree to release data to employers on individual's test results or an individual's engagement with the test programme.

Information on how personal data is managed is available here [Privacy Information](#)

#### **27. Will my test results be sent to my GP?**

We are actively planning to get coronavirus test results into individual GP records in England. NHS Digital will be leading on this, and it involves working closely with the Royal College of GPs and the British Medical Association. This needs to be carefully done to minimise any clinical safety risks and ensure it is done accurately. We are making good progress on the technical solution for this, but it will take a few weeks. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will have their own processes relating to healthcare records.

## SECTION TWO – FOR THE EMPLOYERS OF THOSE WHO ARE BEING TESTED

### **28. Can I get staff in my organisation tested?**

The National Testing Programme has expanded capacity to test even more workers who are self-isolating due to having coronavirus symptoms or because a member of their household has symptoms.

The full list of eligible workers can be found here: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested)  
These categories apply in England only. Devolved Administrations operate their own eligibility criteria. See information on:

- [Scotland](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Wales](#)

### **29. Who can get a test?**

If you are an employer of [essential workers](#), then you can offer tests to the following:

- Any self-isolating members of staff who have coronavirus symptoms
- Member of staff does not have symptoms, but members of their household do, they can get tested.
- Any of your employees who work in the NHS or care homes, regardless of symptoms

### **30. How do I offer the test to my employees?**

An employer referral portal is available to make the process as easy as possible. Employers can upload spreadsheets containing the details of essential workers who need to be tested into the secure employer referral portal. The system will generate invitations to the essential workers via text and email. Essential workers then log into the system and book an appointment directly.

A user guide has been issued to all eligible employers giving step by step directions on how to use the system. Employers should email [portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk) to be given access to the employer referral portal. Users can then log on to the website and upload their employee's data <https://coronavirus-invite-testing.service.gov.uk/>

The portal also has a self-referral function, enabling employees to self-register. This will take some of the administration burden off employers. A separate guide on the Self-Referral Portal has been published and is available at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested)

### **31. What kinds of tests are offered?**

The test confirms if an individual currently has the virus. There are two options for individuals to get tested that will be available via the portal:

- driving to a regional test site OR

- individuals requesting a home test kit which will be delivered to their home.

Where members of the household require testing, up to three can attend a regional test site with the essential worker. The total of four, reflects the maximum number of occupants that can be safely tested in a single vehicle.

If the eligible worker is registering a test on behalf of a member of their household, that employee does not have to attend the test site with the household member. As long as that symptomatic individual's name has been booked as the person who needs the test, it will be their name on the list at the test site.

The maximum number of home test kits an eligible worker can order is four.

### **32. How many employees can access testing?**

Please refer *all* of your employees who are self-isolating because they or their household member(s) have coronavirus symptoms.

### **33. If an employee tests negative, and then later develops symptoms, can they get tested again?**

Yes. If they are experiencing coronavirus symptoms, you may refer them again to be tested.

### **34. If an employee has tested negative, can they come back to work straight away?**

Employees with negative results should only return to work if they feel well enough to do so. If everyone with symptoms who was tested in their household receive a negative result, the employee can return to work immediately, providing they are well enough, and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If a household member tests positive, but the worker tests negative, the worker can return to work on day eight from the start of their symptoms if they feel well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If the worker does not have symptoms but a household member tests positive, the worker should continue to self-isolate in line with [national guidance](#)

Employees should discuss their return to work with their employer, following the steps outlined in [Flowchart describing return to work following a SARS-CoV-2 test](#).

If, after returning to work, they later develop symptoms they should follow [national guidance](#) and self-isolate.

### **35. If an employee has previously tested positive for coronavirus and have another episode of symptoms, should they self-isolate again?**

If the employee is usually healthy and their first illness was so severe they were prioritised for a coronavirus test and the result was positive, they will probably have developed some

short-term immunity to coronavirus. Their new symptoms are very unlikely to be due to coronavirus in the current outbreak and therefore the employee and their household do not need to isolate.

However, if another person in their household develops symptoms and they have not previously tested positive for coronavirus, then they need to isolate along with all other members of the household except for the employee (as they have already tested positive). Employees who are concerned about new possible coronavirus symptoms (a new, continuous cough or a high temperature), use the 111-coronavirus service <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> or call NHS 111.

For up to the minute information for households with possible coronavirus, please refer to the [national guidance](#).

**36. Will I be told if a member of staff has tested positive for coronavirus?**

The programme does not return the results to an employer. It is the individual's responsibility to discuss their test result with their employer as part of their return to work conversation.

We will not agree to release data to employers on individual's test results or an individual's engagement with the test programme.

Information on the management of personal data is available here [Privacy Information](#)

**37. Can contractors and part time staff be tested?**

Yes. Contractors and part time staff can be tested.

**38. My employees live in Scotland/Wales but they live closer to test sites in England OR they travel into England for work. Can I use a test site closer to home/near work?**

Where key workers are based in one nation, if they are able to safely access a test site in another then they may do so, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements for that test site. However, we would discourage anyone from travelling an excessive distance to do so, particularly if they are feeling very unwell.

**39. How does the self-referral portal work? As an employer of essential workers, can I just direct my staff there instead of uploading their details myself?**

Yes you can direct your eligible employees to the self-referral portal <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/> They can book a test for themselves or for members of their household who have coronavirus symptoms. Employees will be able to book tests at regional test sites or order home test kits.

**40. What other support is available for my employees?**

There is a Coronavirus Testing Call Centre for employees who have been referred or booked a test themselves, which is contacted on 0300 303 2713. Lines are open daily 08:00 – 20:00. This call centre does not offer medical advice. If your employee is unwell, they should call NHS 111 and in a medical emergency, dial 999.

## SECTION THREE – REGIONAL TEST SITES

### 41. What is a regional test site?

The Government has worked with private sector partners to establish up to 50 regional test sites at locations across the country. These regional test sites are being used to test eligible individuals for coronavirus, as part of the Government's national testing programme. They are set up in lots of different types of places, such as car parks of major retailers and airports, where there is space and good road links.

### 42. Where are the regional test sites?

At 30 April 2020, 49 regional testing sites are open in the following locations:

| Region           | Location          | Site                              |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Midlands         | Nottingham        | Boots HQ                          |
| London           | London            | Chessington                       |
| London           | London            | Wembley                           |
| London           | London            | Greenwich                         |
| Wales            | Cardiff           | Cardiff                           |
| North West       | Manchester        | Manchester Airport                |
| Northern Ireland | Belfast           | Odyssey Arena                     |
| Midlands         | Birmingham        | Edgbaston                         |
| Scotland         | Glasgow           | Glasgow Airport                   |
| South East       | Gatwick           | Gatwick Airport                   |
| NE & Yorkshire   | Newcastle         | Gateshead                         |
| South West       | Plymouth          | Former Seaton Barracks            |
| North West       | Newton-Le-Willows | Haydock Park                      |
| London           | London            | Nightingale Walk In               |
| East of England  | Stansted          | Stansted Airport                  |
| NE & Yorkshire   | Leeds             | Temple Green                      |
| Scotland         | Aberdeen          | Aberdeen Airport                  |
| Midlands         | Worcester         | Worcester Warriors                |
| Midlands         | Birmingham        | Midlands Met                      |
| Scotland         | Edinburgh         | Edinburgh Airport                 |
| North West       | Preston           | Preston College                   |
| Northern Ireland | Londonderry       | Derry City Rugby Club             |
| East of England  | Ipswich           | Copdock - London Road Park & Ride |
| NE & Yorkshire   | Sheffield         | Doncaster Airport                 |
| South East       | Brighton          | AmEx Stadium                      |
| South West       | Bristol           | Bristol Airport                   |
| East of England  | Milton Keynes     | South Second Street Car Park      |
| Northern Ireland | Portadown         | Craigavon DVA Centre              |
| London           | Central SW        | Twickenham                        |
| South East       | Portsmouth        | Tipnor Lorry Park                 |
| London           | Edmonton (NE)     | Lee Valley Athletics Park         |

|                 |                    |                                     |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| South West      | Exeter             | Honiton Park and Ride               |
| Scotland        | Inverness          | University of Highlands and Islands |
| East of England | Peterborough       | East Of England Showground          |
| NE & Yorkshire  | Hull               | Humber Bridge Car Park              |
| South East      | Oxford             | Thornhill Park & Ride               |
| Midlands        | Coventry           | RICOH Arena                         |
| South West      | Bournemouth        | Creekmore Park & Ride               |
| Midlands        | Lincoln            | Lincolnshire Country Showground     |
| North West      | Penrith            | Penrith Rugby Club                  |
| South East      | Ebbsfleet          | Ebbsfleet International Car Park D  |
| NE & Yorkshire  | York               | Poppleton Bar Park & Ride           |
| North West      | Greater Manchester | Etihad Stadium Overflow Car Park    |
| Wales           | North Wales        | Llandudno Builder Street Coach Park |
| Scotland        | Perth              | Perth College UHI                   |
| NE & Yorkshire  | Bradford           | Bradford Uni Horton Road Car Park   |
| South East      | Guildford          | Onslow Park & Ride                  |
| Midlands        | Leicester          | Birstall Park & Ride                |
| Wales           | West Wales         | Carmarthen Showground               |

#### 43. Who runs the test sites?

The regional test sites are part of the Government's national testing programme. There are several organisations who are working in partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care to set them up and operate them. Partner organisations include:

- Boots
- Deloitte
- G4S
- SERCO
- Sodexo
- Mitie
- Levy

We are hugely grateful to all partner organisations for their invaluable contributions to this programme.

#### 44. As Boots are involved in testing, does this mean I can get a test at my local Boots store?

Boots are providing trained staff to provide testing at the specially established regional test sites. The sites operate a drive-through model. You need to drive to the site and you (and members of your household if they need to be tested) will remain in your vehicle throughout the process. This helps to contain the virus and reduce the risk of passing it to the others at the test sites. **Boots are not providing testing in their stores.**

**45. How many people can be in the vehicle?**

A maximum of four people can be tested in a car. Each person will need to be sat next to the window. If a fifth person is sat in the back-middle seat and are flanked by other people, they cannot be tested.

**46. How far will people have to travel to get to the test site?**

Our aim is to ensure that the vast majority of, if not all, people needing tests will have to travel no more than 45 minutes by car.

**47. Are the military helping with these sites?**

The Armed Forces are supporting the NHS across the country, distributing ventilators and PPE, constructing Nightingale hospitals, training to drive ambulances and supporting the Mobile Test Units. More than 20,000 troops are at readiness to help the country fight the coronavirus.

**48. I work on a regional test site and we are being contacted by members of the press and media requesting access to sites/comments on testing. What should I do?**

All press and media enquiries should be forwarded to [pressofficenewsdesk@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:pressofficenewsdesk@dhsc.gov.uk)



## SECTION FOUR – TESTING FOR CARE HOMES

### **49. Is testing available for the Adult Social Care sector?**

Testing is now available for:

- All social care staff whether symptomatic or asymptomatic
- All social care and care home residents whether symptomatic or asymptomatic
- All patients discharged from hospital into care homes to be tested before discharge as a matter of course.
- For individuals coming from the community, we will move to these residents being tested prior to admission in care homes.

### **50. Who is responsible for testing in care homes?**

Public Health England's health protection teams (HPTs) play a vital role locally in responding to any outbreak in care homes, providing tailored infection control advice to allow staff to protect themselves and their residents. This is why the current approach involves any number of suspected outbreaks of coronavirus being reported to the HPT, who will arrange rapid testing for all residents who are symptomatic through PHE's labs or NHS partner labs. See <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team> for more information.

The Department of Health and Social Care is rapidly rolling out delivery of test kits to care homes across England to enable testing of residents and PHE is fully supportive of this approach. Testing of the whole home will now be offered including asymptomatic and symptomatic residents as well as asymptomatic staff who work at the home. Many local systems have very successful processes already in place for testing and this national offer is to supplement, not replace, this.

### **51. What are the satellite sites? Are they part of the regional test sites?**

We have introduced satellite sites as both to expand overall test capacity and to provide a more agile and flexible method to complement the fixed regional testing centres.

Under the satellite model, we distribute test kits to an NHS trust or care facility that has a pressing need, and then collect and process the resulting swabs through the Coronavirus National Testing Programme labs. In contrast to the regional centres, this relies upon the local health or social care organisation to provide the necessary facilities, staff, and PPE are in place to enable the testing.

### **52. How do care workers access coronavirus testing? Can they only get a test at a satellite site?**

If you work in a care home and either you or a member of your household has symptoms, you can access testing either by employer referral or using the online self-referral portal. If your employer refers you for testing, it will be at a drive-through regional test site. If you book your test via the self-referral portal, you can choose between a drive-through regional site or by ordering a home test kit.

If you are a care worker having to self-isolate because members of your household have coronavirus symptoms, you can get them tested in line with the testing [eligibility criteria](#).

**53. I'm a social care worker but I don't have symptoms of coronavirus. Can I get tested?**

As per the Secretary of State statement on 28 April 2020, all social care workers who are asymptomatic can voluntarily undertake coronavirus testing. Asymptomatic testing is important in the context controlling localised outbreaks, including in care homes. We know that a positive test result is very likely to be accurate. If an asymptomatic individual returns a negative test result, they should still exercise caution and follow the [national guidance](#) if they subsequently experience symptoms.

## SECTION FIVE – MOBILE TESTING

### **54. What is mobile testing?**

Mobile testing enables temporary testing sites to be set up quickly to serve communities on a rolling basis. Mobile testing is a DHSC-led programme and is delivered through a series of Mobile Testing Units (MTU), which are currently operated by Army personnel. An MTU provides a clinically assured, stand-alone testing service to essential workers in the community. It's intended for people who cannot easily access regional test sites.

### **55. What is a Mobile Test Unit?**

An MTU is comprised of a customised van with pop-up shelters and an integrated traffic management system. It's been designed in line with stringent clinical safety requirements and infection prevention. MTUs are staffed by up to 12 personnel and can operate at different scales in order to best serve the demand needs of the local community.

### **56. How effective are MTUs compared to regional test sites?**

An MTU has a capacity of 300 tests per day as standard, with the potential to carry the equipment required to deliver up to 500 tests. The number of tests an MTU will complete in a day will vary, depending on the size of the site, the ratio of vehicles against pedestrian subjects and how long the MTU will be open.

### **57. What are the logistical arrangements for an MTU?**

Hours of operation for an MTU are approximately 10.00-15.00. The timings are dependent on the driving time for an MTU from the regional test site it must get its supplies from.

The number of days an MTU remains in a single location will vary depending on demand for testing in that area. The site times can be extended if required.

### **58. How do you book an MTU?**

The deployment process is overseen centrally by DHSC. Where they are deployed is informed by local bodies including Local Resilience Forums, NHS Trusts and other local partners who can assess test demand in a given area. Local bodies should contact the local COVID-19 Response Forum who will then contact the DHSC Mobile Testing Operations Hub Regional Leads.

MTUs cannot be requested by private citizens. Eligible individuals who require testing can do so via the [self-referral portal](#).

## SECTION SIX - HOME TESTING

### **59. How does home testing work?**

Home testing enables people to get tested for coronavirus without leaving their home. They are self-administered tests. They involve taking a swab of the back of the throat and nose.

You order them via the [self-referral portal](#). The order is fulfilled by Amazon and the user books for their sample to be collected by Royal Mail couriers. Once returned, you can expect your test results to be sent to you by text or email within 72 hours.

### **60. Is home testing safe? Will it produce the same quality of results as visiting a test site?**

Home testing is safe, and those with no clinical background or training are able to take a test effectively. Each kit comes with instructions to guide you through how to administer the swab yourself. Further guidance and a short video to take you through the process step by step is available [here](#).

### **61. How many test kits can I order?**

You should order a test for every symptomatic member of your household, as long as they are over five years old. If there are more than four symptomatic members of your household, then you will not be able to book home test kits at this time. Tests are most effective for individuals who are tested in the first three days of having symptoms.

### **62. What is Amazon and the Royal Mail's involvement in Home Testing? Will my personal data be kept safe?**

Amazon and Royal Mail are partners who are using their world class logistics systems to deliver Home Testing nationwide. They do not have access to the results or any health data.

## SECTION SEVEN – MEGA LABS

### **63. What can you tell us about “mega labs?”**

All three of our mega labs - Milton Keynes, Alderley Park and Glasgow - are fully functional and are already conducting thousands of tests a day.