




Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing available for adult social care in England

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Symptomatic individuals

COVID-19 and flu symptoms can be very similar and it is important to think of both as a possibility when staff, residents or service users have symptoms. The following symptoms could be COVID-19, flu or another respiratory infection:

 Fever of 37.8°C or above	 New onset or acute worsening of one or more of these symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cough • runny nose or congestion • sore throat • sneezing • hoarseness • shortness of breath • wheezing • chest pain 	 Sudden decline in physical or mental ability
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Symptomatic staff or residents should take a PCR test and also LFT*. Isolate symptomatic individuals. Send symptomatic staff home and advise testing through the [online portal](#) or 119.

Any adult social care services with a suspected outbreak (of flu, COVID-19 or another acute respiratory infection) should contact their [Health Protection Team \(HPT\)](#). Many interventions including flu antivirals are more effective the sooner they are started, so do not delay.

Potential outbreaks – contacting the HPT

High risk settings (Care Homes, High-risk Extra Care, High risk Supported Living in receipt of regular testing), should contact the HPT if they have with one or more positive cases of COVID-19 or flu, or two or more individuals with any of the symptoms above (suspected cases). This includes both staff and residents and positive results from PCR or LFT.

For these high risk settings, if you have multiple people with symptoms, do not wait until receiving the COVID-19 PCR result before contacting the HPT.

Other adult social care services should contact the HPT if they suspect an outbreak.

+ If there are one or more **COVID-19 positives**, further COVID-19 tests (and outbreak response) might be needed depending on the setting. Also consider whether individuals may be eligible for COVID-19 treatments including antivirals or monoclonal antibodies (through the [PANORAMIC](#) national study or through [direct access](#) for those at highest risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19).

For care homes and high risk Extra Care or supported living settings, start daily LFT for staff if there are one or more positive COVID-19 results in staff or residents.

Care home outbreak testing may also be needed – see page 5.

- A symptomatic individual who tests **negative for COVID-19** may have another infectious illness like flu and action may be needed to limit transmission, including but not limited to:

- **If multiple individuals have symptoms, this could be a flu outbreak – discuss flu antivirals with your HPT**
- Symptomatic individuals should continue to isolate if they continue to have symptoms.
- Staff should stay away from work if they have flu like symptoms.
- Appropriate PPE should be worn when working with residents/service users with flu like symptoms.

Remember, there are also preventative steps to take to reduce the risk from flu:

1. **Maximise [flu vaccination uptake](#) for staff and residents as well as COVID-19 booster vaccination.** Staff can receive a free flu vaccine by booking an appointment at their GP practice or community pharmacy.
2. **Keep good Infection prevention and control measures in place** - flu spreads in a similar way to COVID-19. The measures in place for COVID-19 such as ventilation, hand hygiene, social distancing, PPE, cleaning and avoiding symptomatic individuals entering the care home will all help to reduce the risks from flu. This [poster](#) can be displayed for visitors.

*For adult social care, anyone with the symptoms above should do both a COVID-19 PCR and also if possible an LFT. The LFT can provide an early warning that someone is positive and inform the outbreak management approach but the PCR should still be done for someone with symptoms, whether the LFT is positive or negative.

Care Homes: Staff and residents

Key: **P** PCR test **L** Rapid lateral flow test (LFT)

No clinically suspected or confirmed cases in staff or residents

Apply for regular testing and follow whole home retesting cycle.*

- **Staff testing:** Weekly PCR and thrice-weekly LFT (one LFT on the same day as the PCR and then every 2-3 days later)
- **Resident testing:** Every 28 days with PCR

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff	P						
	L		L		L		
Resident	P						

All adult care homes registered with CQC are eligible for retesting using the organisation registration portal. See guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>

If there is a positive case in the care home from either staff or residents with PCR or LFT, conduct rapid response LFT testing on staff daily and report to the HPT. See next page for more details on what to do.

In addition to the the regular testing pattern above:

Test staff with LFT immediately before shift if individual has worked somewhere else since the last time they worked in that care home.

Any staff returning to work after a period of leave which has resulted in them missing their weekly PCR test should take an LFT at the beginning of their shift.

For further information, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-in-adult-care-homes>

The 90 day policy:

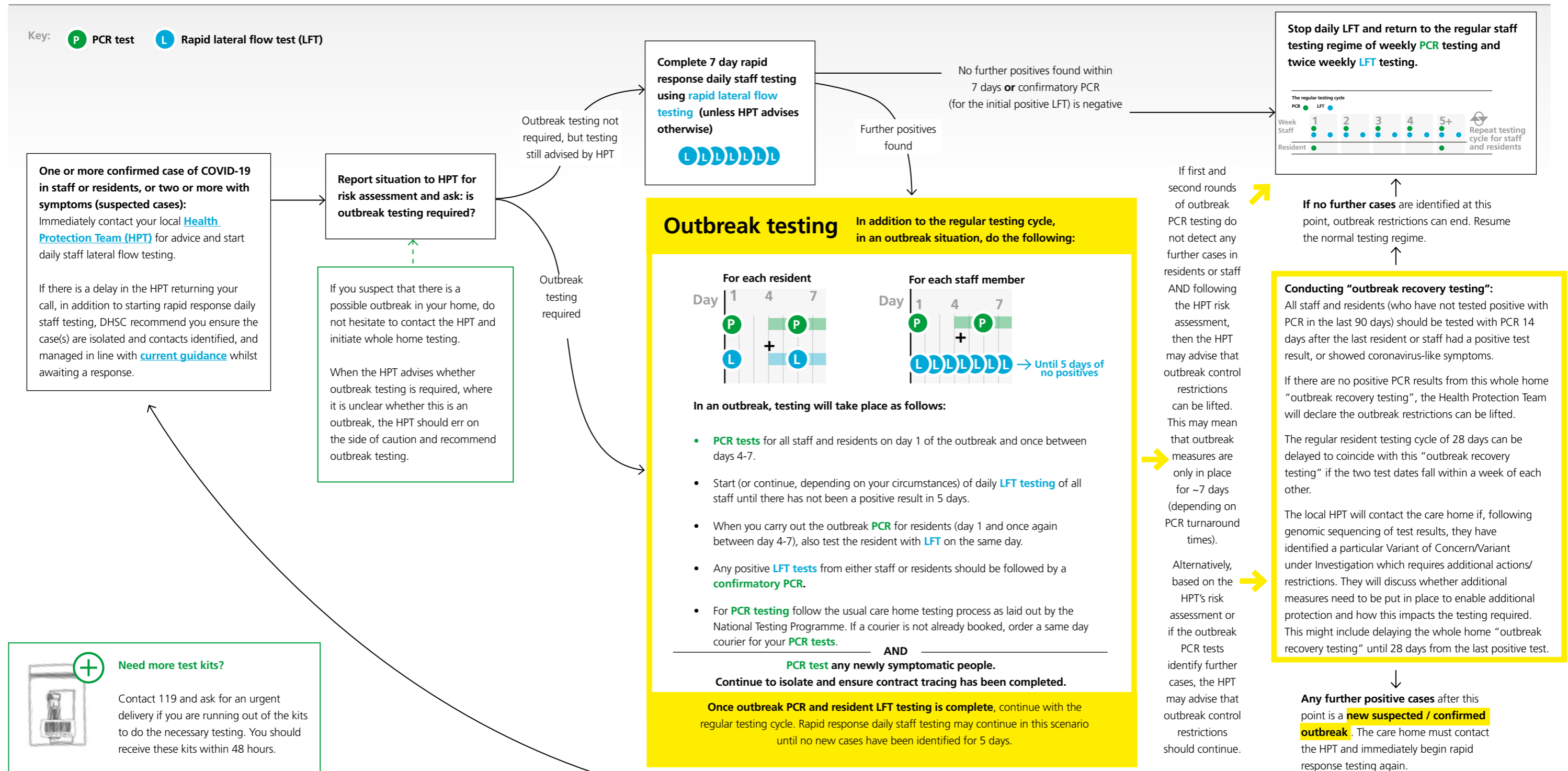
If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFT for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time, in which case they should be retested immediately using PCR, or they meet the conditions set out in the ['Management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care' guidance](#).

This 90 day period is from the initial onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic when tested, their positive test result. Individuals should use evidence of their positive PCR test to show they are currently exempt from asymptomatic testing.

Care Homes: Outbreak testing

Definition of an outbreak: 2 or more clinically suspected or confirmed positives (LFT or PCR) among residents or staff detected in the same 14 day period. Two or more cases therefore usually requires outbreak testing, HPT to advise. One positive test result may be the first sign of an outbreak, so you should also contact your health protection team for advice in this instance.

If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFT for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time or meet the other conditions set out in the [‘Management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care’ guidance](#).



Care Homes: Family and friends

Key: **P** PCR test **L** Rapid lateral flow test (LFT)

For more information about visitor guidance, visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus>

Is the visitor providing regular essential care and support?

No

All family and friends visitors to care homes should be tested each time they visit with an LFT **L**. Visitors to care homes are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated.

If a visitor receives a negative result, visits can proceed as long as visitors wear appropriate PPE throughout the visit and follow all infection prevention and control measures.

If a visitor receives an invalid result, then retest the visitor with an LFT. If they receive an invalid result again, visitors can have a visit similar to someone who has not been tested, at the discretion of each care home.

If a visitor receives a positive result, they should conduct a confirmatory PCR **P** and register this at the care home using the 'home' registration route. Then the visitor should go home to self-isolate immediately to await their result.

Yes

All essential care givers should be tested in line with care home staff testing, including weekly PCR **P** and thrice-weekly LFT **L** as well as any rapid response or outbreak testing determined by the local HPT.

The 90 day policy:

If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFT for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time, in which case they should be retested immediately using PCR, or they meet the conditions set out in the ['Management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care' guidance](#).

This 90 day period is from the initial onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic when tested, their positive test result. Individuals should use evidence of their positive PCR test to show they are currently exempt from asymptomatic testing.

Visitors should not enter the care home if they are feeling unwell, even if they have tested negative for COVID-19 and are fully vaccinated. Transmissible viruses such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and norovirus can be just as dangerous to care home residents as COVID-19. If visitors have any symptoms that suggest other transmissible viruses, such as cough, high temperature, diarrhoea or vomiting, they should avoid the care home until at least 5 days after they feel better.

Care Homes: Visiting professionals

“Visiting professionals” are defined as professionals who visit care homes as part of delivering their role, including health professionals, CQC inspectors and maintenance workers. **The default position is that without a negative test, the professional should not be allowed into the care home**, (unless in an emergency, unless overridden by the care home manager following a risk based decision, or unless their entry is required by law such as CQC inspectors).

Key: **P** PCR test **L** Rapid lateral flow test (LFT)

Care Homes: Visiting professionals

NHS Staff

L x 2 per week, via NHS Testing*

NHS staff should be tested twice a week using LFT through their employer. Before entry, care homes should see evidence from the professional of a negative rapid lateral flow test within the last 72hrs, which shows they are following the NHS staff testing regime. If it has been more than 72 hours since the NHS professional was tested, the care home should test the individual before entry to the care home. Some NHS staff may use other testing technologies, for example LAMP rather than LFT – see [guidance](#) for further information)

CQC Inspectors

P x 1 per week + **L** on the day of their visit

In addition to their current weekly PCR testing, CQC inspectors should be tested using **LFT on the day of their visit** to a care home/care setting (including extra care or supported living settings). This should be conducted at home by the CQC inspector as close as possible before their visit to the care home/care setting.

Other Visiting Professionals

L on the day of their visit

All visiting professionals who are not regularly tested through another route such as NHS staff or CQC inspectors, should be **tested on the day of their visit**, similar to visitors. For further guidance on testing for visiting professionals, see here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-lateral-flow-testing-of-visitors-in-care-homes>

The 90 day policy:

If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFT for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time, in which case they should be retested immediately using PCR, or they meet the conditions set out in the [‘Management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care’ guidance](#).

This 90 day period is from the initial onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic when tested, their positive test result. Individuals should use evidence of their positive PCR test to show they are currently exempt from asymptomatic testing.

Extra Care and Supported Living

Key: P PCR test L Rapid lateral flow test (LFT)

You have a new or current outbreak?

Yes

Outbreak Testing

Report to [Health Protection Team \(HPT\)](#) / Directors of Public Health. They will:

- undertake an initial risk assessment
- provide advice on outbreak management
- decide what testing is needed

To find out which public health team covers your area visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>

No

Does your setting meet **BOTH** of the following criteria:

- 1** The setting is a closed community with substantial facilities shared between multiple people
- AND**
- 2** Majority of residents (more than 50%) receive the kind of personal care that is CQC regulated (rather than help with cooking, cleaning and shopping).

Yes, both criteria are met

No, just one of these are met

For full guidance on testing for extra care and supported living: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-service-for-extra-care-and-supported-living-settings>

High risk extra care and supported living settings:

Staff testing: Weekly PCR and thrice-weekly LFT (one LFT on the same day as the PCR and then every 2-3 days later)

Resident testing: Monthly PCR testing

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff	P						
	L		L		L		
Resident	P						

If there is a positive case, immediately test all staff daily with LFT for 7 days.

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

Wider extra care and supported living settings:

Staff testing: Weekly PCR testing

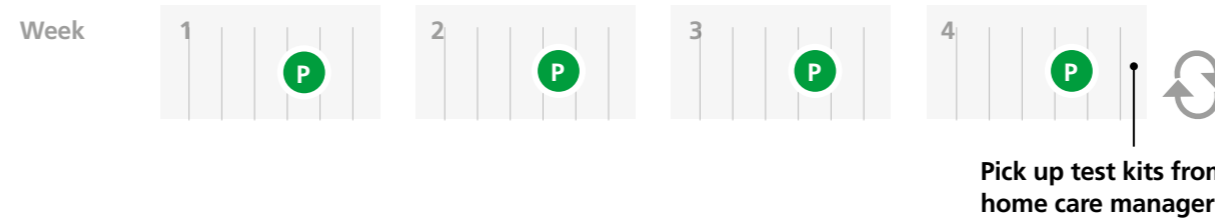
P									
P									
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Home Care

Key: **P** PCR test **L** Rapid lateral flow test (LFT)

Domiciliary care

All CQC registered domiciliary care workers should conduct weekly PCR testing.



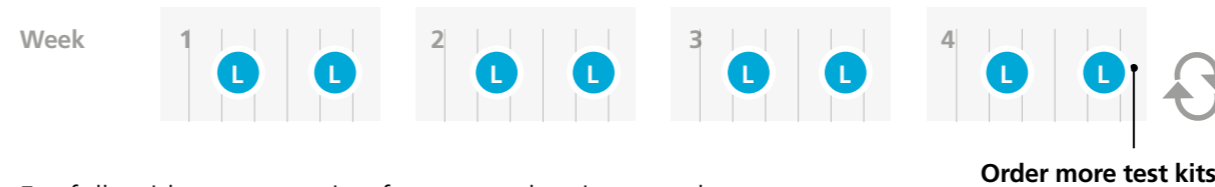
Organisations can order tests for their staff using their UON from <https://request-testing.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>
 All home care organisations registered with CQC providing personal care are eligible for retesting using the organisation registration portal.

For full guidance on testing for domiciliary care testing, please see:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-homecare-workers>

Personal assistants

Personal Assistants should test twice a week using LFD through the Universal Testing Offer, please see page 11.

Personal assistants should order tests every 28 days for themselves or an employer can order tests for their personal assistant from <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>



For full guidance on testing for personal assistants, please see:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-personal-assistants>

Type of home care?

The 90 day policy:

If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFT for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time, in which case they should be retested immediately using PCR, or they meet the conditions set out in the ['Management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care' guidance](#).

This 90 day period is from the initial onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic when tested, their positive test result. Individuals should use evidence of their positive PCR test to show they are currently exempt from asymptomatic testing.

Day Care Centres

Day care centres run by paid care staff that provide services in non-residential care settings which support the health and wellbeing of adults (i.e. over 18). This includes settings such as:

- purpose-built day centres
- day centres attached to or part of a care home or supported living setting
- other buildings in communities specifically used for regular adult day care.

Eligible settings can get access to testing through the organisation self-referral portal: <https://request-onboarding.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>

Key: ● PCR test ● Rapid lateral flow test (LFT)

Staff: Weekly PCR and thrice-weekly LFT (one LFT on the same day as the PCR and then every 2-3 days later).



Organisations can order tests for their staff using their UON from <https://request-testing.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>
 For full guidance on testing for day care centres, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-adult-day-care-centre-workers>

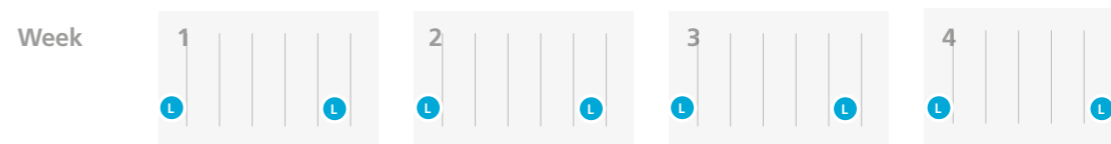
The 90 day policy:

If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFT for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time, in which case they should be retested immediately using PCR, or they meet the conditions set out in the [‘Management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care’ guidance](#).

This 90 day period is from the initial onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic when tested, their positive test result. Individuals should use evidence of their positive PCR test to show they are currently exempt from asymptomatic testing.

Service users testing schedule: Service users can still visit the centres if they have not tested. Testing is not mandatory.

We recommend for service users that are able to test, to test twice a week with 3-4 days in between using rapid LFT only. If they are attending twice a week, test on the days of attendance. If they are attending once a week, they only need to test once in the week. These should ideally be on the day, prior to attending the centre.



Testing can be completed either at-home or on-site at the discretion of the day care centre manager.

Service users can also self-test or receive assisted swabbing.

All other ASC testing

Do you have access to regular ASC testing?
(Are you part of a testing programme detailed above?)

Yes

Adult Social Care staff who are eligible for regular testing through a national adult social care testing programme (for example all care home staff, domiciliary carers, eligible extra care and supported living settings, and eligible day care centres) should continue to access testing through their existing adult social care testing programme and continuing registering all results to their Unique Organisation Number (UON).

This is important because these testing regimes are designed specifically for each part of adult social care based on clinical advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and Public Health England (PHE). We monitor the testing data for each part of adult social care to understand the prevalence in that sector and inform our guidance to keep people as safe as possible.

No

The 90 day policy:

If someone has tested positive with a PCR test, they should not be tested using PCR or LFT for 90 days, unless they develop new symptoms during this time, in which case they should be retested immediately using PCR, or they meet the conditions set out in the ['Management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care' guidance](#).

This 90 day period is from the initial onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic when tested, their positive test result. Individuals should use evidence of their positive PCR test to show they are currently exempt from asymptomatic testing.

[Free rapid coronavirus \(COVID-19\) tests](#) are now available for everyone in England without symptoms.

Anyone working in adult social care who is not currently part of regular testing regime should access twice weekly testing through this link. This will be crucial in detecting people that are infectious and to help maintain the safety of everyone in the ASC sector.

Adult Social Care staff who are not part of a regular testing regime may include social workers and support workers, those working for charities or community organisations, shared lives carers, personal assistants, unpaid carers and others. Where appropriate, regular testing of people being supported (for example if attending respite) may also be beneficial.

Rapid lateral flow tests (LFT) are available for home delivery, for collection at participating pharmacies and local sites and at local asymptomatic test sites. Staff should access these tests through any of these routes and test twice weekly (3-4 days), ideally before starting work.

Our guidance on testing for anyone working in adult social care who is not part of regular testing at work and unpaid carers can be found [here](#).

Further ASC testing information

Anyone with symptoms can get tested for coronavirus by visiting www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Further Care Home Information

Testing for people being admitted to a care home

People being discharged from hospital to a care home are tested at hospital before discharge. For further information, visit: [guidance on admission, isolation and test](#). This guidance will continue to be updated regularly so check back every retest cycle.

Testing for people being admitted to a care home from the community

We have published a [service model](#) for care homes to follow when testing individuals moving from the community into a care home.

Further ASC Information

Testing Strategy

Our testing strategy for adult social care is based on scientific advice on relative priorities and available testing in order to limit the spread and save lives. We are continuing to develop our testing strategy for adult social care. We will continue to review our social care testing strategy for adult social care in light of the latest evidence, available capacity and new testing innovations. Anyone with suspected coronavirus symptoms can access testing through the self-referral portal on gov.uk/coronavirus

Testing and COVID-19 Vaccine

Whilst vaccination offers vital protection, no vaccine is 100% effective, and importantly we do not yet know if being vaccinated prevents transmission of the disease. In order to identify positive cases and continue to monitor the effects and transmission of coronavirus, we must continue to operate a thorough and meaningful testing programme, even in settings where vaccines have been administered. We will keep this policy under review as further evidence becomes available regarding the impact of vaccination.

Antibody Testing

All paid adult social care staff are able to access an at-home antibody test. This includes all staff working in residential care, homecare and local authority adult social care departments. For more information and to access an antibody test, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/register-coronavirus-antibody-test>

ASC Staff Isolation Guidance

If a staff member is fully vaccinated and notified that they are a contact of a COVID-19 positive case, they are not required to self-isolate and can continue working provided they:

- have received a negative PCR test
- receive daily negative LFD tests for the duration of their otherwise isolation period

If an unvaccinated or partially vaccinated staff member is notified that they are a contact of a COVID-19 positive case, they must self-isolate as advised unless they are exempt.

For further guidance, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>

Further advice

If you have any issues with registration, delivery or collection of test kits, contact the Coronavirus Testing call centre on 119. It's open from 07:00 to 23:00 every day.

Any adult social care setting with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 outbreak should contact their local Health Protection Team. Contact details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>