



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# Weekly statistics for rapid asymptomatic testing (England)

6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022

Published 20 January 2022

This report does not contain figures for the latest reporting week (6 January to 12 January 2022) covering all LFD testing and confirmatory PCRs in England and LFD testing and confirmatory PCRs in education settings. This is due to an issue with the data quality of the underlying data source. Work is underway to ensure this is resolved to allow these figures to be included in future publications.

# Contents

Main points for the latest week (6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022) .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Publication update .....	5
Background.....	6
LFD tests reported by NHS staff, England .....	12
Tests conducted and registered to workplace settings, England .....	15
About this data .....	17

## Main points for the latest week (6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022)

### LFD and PCR tests in care homes, England

1,022,025 LFD tests were reported in care homes, a decrease of 0.1% from the previous week.

787,743 PCR tests were reported in care homes, an increase of 43.9% from the previous week.

### LFD tests taken by NHS staff, England

In the week ending 12 January 2022, 148,380 LFD tests were reported by NHS primary care staff, a 6.5% increase on the previous week.

In the week ending 12 January 2022, 49,210 tests were reported by other NHS employees, a 7.5% increase on the previous week.

In the week ending 5 January 2022, 396,890 LFD tests were reported by secondary care staff in NHS Trusts, a 32.7% increase from the previous week.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The timing of the weekly process of submission by NHS trusts means that data for the latest week is not available. Figures for tests conducted by staff in NHS trusts are therefore published with an additional week's lag in comparison to the rest of the data in this publication. For more information see the [NHS Test and Trace methodology](#).

## Introduction

This statistical publication provides information on rapid testing for people without coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms in England. This includes the number of:

- LFD tests and confirmatory PCR tests conducted by test result
- LFD tests and confirmatory PCR tests conducted linked to education settings
- LFD and PCR tests conducted in care homes
- LFD tests conducted by NHS staff
- LFD tests conducted in private and public sector workplaces

This publication focuses on rapid testing using lateral flow device (LFD) tests. However, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests are included where appropriate, either for comparison or where regular asymptomatic PCR testing is used. All data used in the report can be found in the 'Tests conducted' data tables on the [Weekly statistics for NHS Test and Trace](#) page. This includes information on both LFD and PCR tests at lower tier local authority level.

The data in this release can be used to:

- determine the effectiveness of NHS Test and Trace in the expansion of rapid asymptomatic testing
- monitor the levels of testing and positive test results amongst various settings such as in education, care homes and by NHS staff

This data should not be used to:

- calculate the prevalence of COVID-19 in the wider population
- calculate case positivity rates, the reasons for which are explained in the [About this data](#) section
- assess the effectiveness of the testing types used in England
- compare the mass testing programmes across nations

PCR and LFD case positivity rates are published within [National flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports](#) and PCR positivity rates are also published on the [Coronavirus in the UK dashboard](#). Further information on prevalence and positivity rate can be found in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey](#).

The figures in this report include LFD tests which were registered through the National Testing Programme digital infrastructure. They also now include the number of tests reported by secondary care NHS staff which were registered via a different route.

See the [About this data](#) section for more information.

## Publication update

This report does not contain figures for the latest reporting week (6 January to 12 January 2022) covering all testing and confirmatory PCRs in England and LFD testing and confirmatory PCRs in education settings. This is due to an issue with the data quality of the underlying data source. Work is underway to ensure this is resolved to allow these figures to be included in future publications.

This publication does not include information specifically on the Omicron variant of concern.

# Background

## Types of tests

### PCR tests

PCR tests check for the genetic material of the coronavirus in the sample, which is taken using a swab and is processed in a lab via a polymerase chain reaction (PCR). This type of test is predominantly used:

- for anyone who has symptoms
- to confirm a positive LFD test result
- for regular asymptomatic testing in social care

### Lateral flow device tests

LFD tests, often referred to as rapid tests, test for the presence of proteins called 'antigens' which are produced by the virus. They are swab tests that give results in 30 minutes or less, without the need for processing in a laboratory. These tests are primarily used for those who do not have symptoms.

From 21 October 2020, LFD tests were made available in limited capacity except where rapid testing pilots were conducted. Since then, their availability has expanded, initially to a broader range of settings and from 9 April 2021 to everyone in England.

Prior to 27 January 2021, if an individual received a positive LFD test result, they were routinely asked to take a PCR test to confirm this. Between 27 January and 29 March 2021, confirmatory PCR was suspended, except for those self-reporting their test result and for some other use cases such as testing for cross-channel hauliers. From 30 March 2021, confirmatory PCR testing was reinstated for all positive LFD tests, taking into account the lower prevalence of COVID-19 and the benefits of PCR testing for detecting variants of concern.

### Rapid testing for people without symptoms

Rapid testing using LFD tests is currently being offered to people who do not have symptoms, in a range of different settings such as education providers, care homes and workplaces. In addition, anyone in England can now obtain LFD tests for the purposes of regular asymptomatic testing. See [regular rapid coronavirus tests if you do not have symptoms](#) for more information.

Some LFD testing is carried out at asymptomatic test sites, in a range of settings such as universities, schools, care homes and workplaces. They are also set up by local authorities as part of the [community testing programme](#). Testing at these sites is assisted: a person will take a

swab test under the supervision of a trained operator who then processes the test and reads and records the result.

Most LFD testing is now carried out entirely by individuals themselves (that is an individual takes their own test, unassisted, and reports their own result). For more information see [understanding lateral flow tests for people without symptoms](#).

## Tests conducted and registered to care home settings, England

Asymptomatic testing, using both rapid LFD tests and PCR tests has been rolled out differently across different care home settings and their residents, staff, and visitors, as summarised in the table below. For more information on this see the [COVID-19 care home guidance](#).

The number of tests conducted in care homes includes residents, staff, and visitors tested via test kits directly sent to the care home which were registered. It will not include care home residents, staff, or visitors who are tested via a different route, for example at a regional or local test site or a mobile testing unit or tests that were not registered.

For more information see the [NHS Test and Trace methodology](#).

Care setting	Dates	Frequency	Test kit
Care home residents	7 June 2020 to present	Monthly  In the event of an outbreak: day 1 and between days 4 to 7	PCR
	22 February 2021 to present	In the event of an outbreak: day 1 and between days 4 to 7 at health protection team discretion	LFD
Care home staff	7 June 2020 to present	Weekly  In the event of an outbreak: day 1 and between days 4 to 7	PCR
	23 December 2020 to present	Twice weekly  In the event of a positive case in the care home: daily until 5 days without a positive	LFD
Care home indoor visitors	8 March 2021 to present	Weekly – essential care givers	PCR

Care setting	Dates	Frequency	Test kit
	8 March 2021 to present	Twice weekly – essential care givers	LFD
	2 December 2020 to present*	On arrival	LFD
Care home visiting professionals – CQC inspectors	14 December 2020 to present	Weekly	PCR
	22 March 2021 to present	Before visit	LFD
Care home visiting professionals – all other professionals	14 December 2020 to present	On arrival, unless part of a regular testing regime and can provide proof of a negative result within last 72 hours	LFD

\* Close contact visits with LFD testing began on 2 December 2020 but ceased on 6 January 2021 because of the national lockdown. Throughout the period of national restrictions, visits were limited to outdoors, in visiting pods, or with a substantial screen; as well as those in exceptional circumstances such as end of life.

DHSC also publishes care home testing data in the monthly [Adult social care in England statistics](#). This publication uses the same data source but has a different methodology for presenting testing in care homes therefore differences in the figures will occur, see the [NHS Test and Trace methodology](#) for more information.

## PCR and LFD tests conducted and registered to care home settings, England

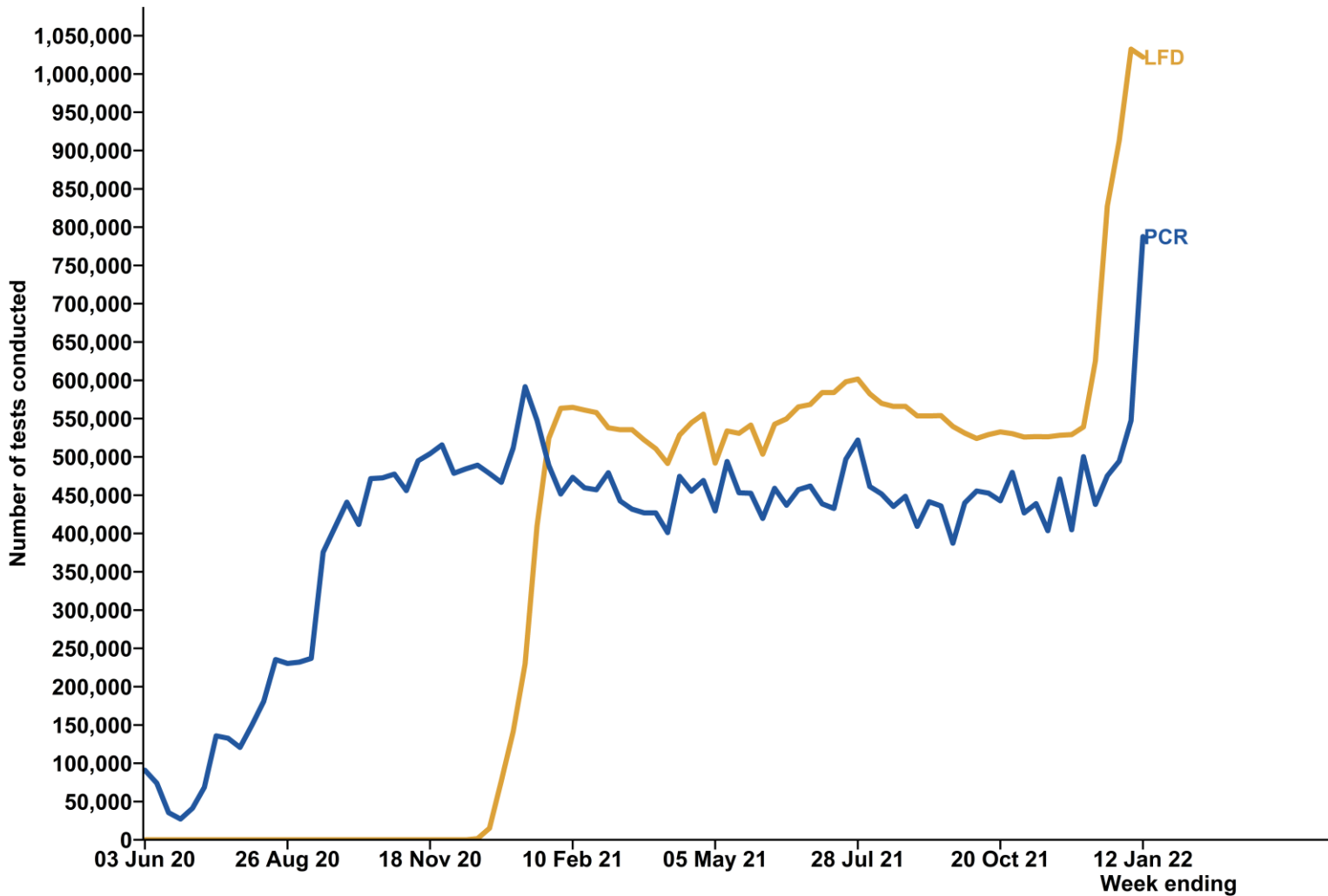
Since the beginning of 2021, the number of PCRs conducted in care homes has fluctuated but remained broadly stable. In the latest week (6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022), the number of PCRs conducted has increased steeply to 787,743, compared to 547,403 in the previous week (30 December 2021 to 5 January 2022).

Between the weeks beginning 16 December and 30 December 2021, LFDs in care homes have increased rapidly. This coincided with staff in care homes being advised to take 3 tests a week rather than 2 from the 15 December 2021. In the latest week ending 12 January 2022, 1,022,025 LFD tests were conducted and registered to care homes, which is a decrease compared to 1,032,367 tests in the previous week.

Of the LFD tests conducted in the latest week (6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022), 16,810 tests returned a positive result, and 1,004,949 tests returned a negative result. Since LFD tests were introduced, 103,756 positive results and 30,219,950 negative results have been reported.



**Figure 1. Number of LFD and PCR tests conducted in care homes, England**



This data can be found in the 'table\_11' and 'table\_12' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 12 January 2022: data tables' document on the [Weekly statistics for NHS Test and Trace](#) page.

## LFD testing in care homes by staff and residents

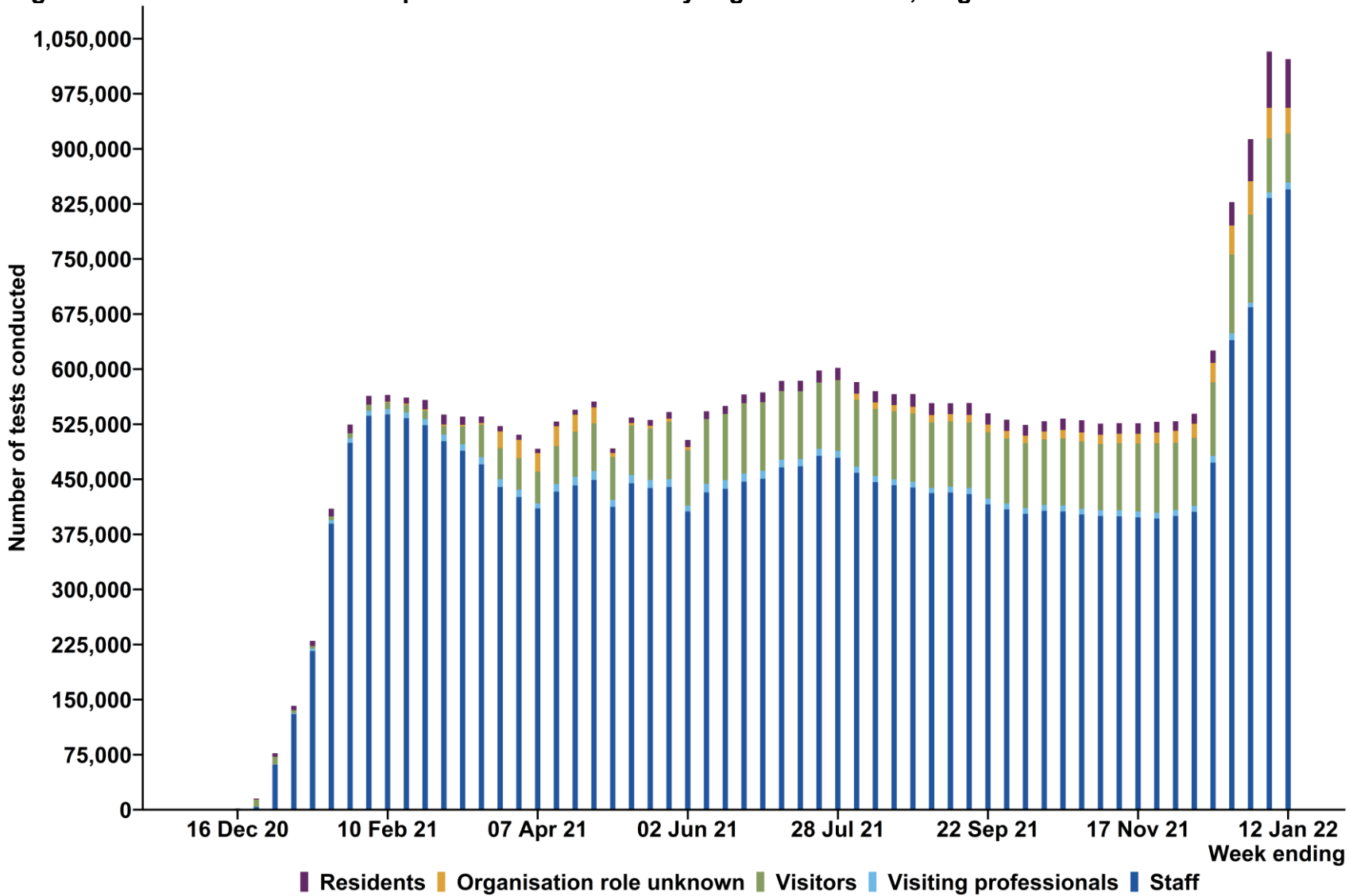
The number of LFD tests conducted by staff in care homes has increased to 844,680 in the latest week (6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022) from 832,945 tests in the previous week. Of these, 12,849 returned a positive result compared to 15,241 in the previous week.

In the latest week (6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022), 66,220 LFD tests were conducted by care home residents, a decrease from 76,579 in the previous week.

## LFD testing in care homes by visitors and visiting professionals

In the latest week (6 January 2022 to 12 January 2022), 9,550 LFD tests were taken by visiting professionals in care homes, which is an increase from 7,725 in the previous week. The number of tests conducted by visitors has decreased to 66,693 in the latest week compared to 73,806 in the previous week (30 December 2021 to 5 January 2022).

Figure 2. Number of LFD tests reported in care homes by organisation role, England



This data can be found in the 'table\_12' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 12 January 2022: data tables' document on the [Weekly statistics for NHS Test and Trace](#) page.

## LFD tests reported by NHS staff, England

Rapid asymptomatic testing by NHS staff began in November 2020 and has since expanded to include the following groups. All positive LFD test results in the NHS are followed up with a confirmatory PCR and contact tracing activities are triggered by the PCR test result.

Group tested	Date	Frequency
Staff in NHS trusts	November 2020	Twice weekly
Staff in primary care	December 2020	Twice weekly
NHS-commissioned services in the independent sector	January 2021	Twice weekly

Staff in primary care and those in the independent sector delivering NHS services self-report their test result through the Test and Trace GOV.UK portal, whereas staff in NHS trusts report their results to their employer. The NHS trust then submits data for their staff to NHS Digital (formerly to Public Health England) which is separate to reporting through the National Testing Programme digital infrastructure. This separate reporting system was established this way because NHS secondary care providers began testing with LFD's before an NHS Digital reporting solution for trusts was built. Because of this, the figures for NHS trusts are not included in the national figures for the number of LFD tests conducted reported via this route. We report them separately here.

Staff in NHS trusts and services are able to access additional forms of testing along with lateral flow testing, including asymptomatic testing with PCR and LAMP (loop mediated isothermal amplification). NHS staff testing via these additional methods are not included in these figures.

The number of positive test results received by NHS staff is not published as a proportion of the total tests conducted because individuals test repeatedly and therefore cannot be compared with other testing regimes. See the [Data quality](#) section for more information.

## LFD tests reported by NHS primary care staff

Primary care services provide the first point of contact in the healthcare system, acting as the 'front door' of the NHS. Primary care includes general practice, community pharmacy, dental, and optometry (eye health) services.

The number of LFD tests reported by primary care staff had declined from February 2021 but have increased overall since mid-December. In the latest week (6 January to 12 January 2022), 148,380 LFD tests were reported by NHS primary care staff which is an increase from 139,365 in the previous week. 4,571 positive LFD test results were returned in the latest week by NHS

primary care staff, an increase from 4,397 in the previous week. Since LFD testing for primary care staff began, there have been a total of 24,911 positive test results.

## LFD tests reported by staff in NHS trusts

NHS trusts include acute and specialist hospitals, community, mental health and learning disability and ambulance services. Staff in NHS trusts report their test results via their employer, which is separate to reporting through the National Testing Program digital infrastructure. These tests are therefore not included in the total number of LFD tests conducted reported earlier in the bulletin.

The timing of the weekly process of submission by NHS trusts means that data for the latest week is not available. Figures for tests conducted by staff in NHS trusts are therefore published with an additional week's lag in comparison to the rest of the data in this publication. For more information see the [NHS Test and Trace statistics methodology](#).

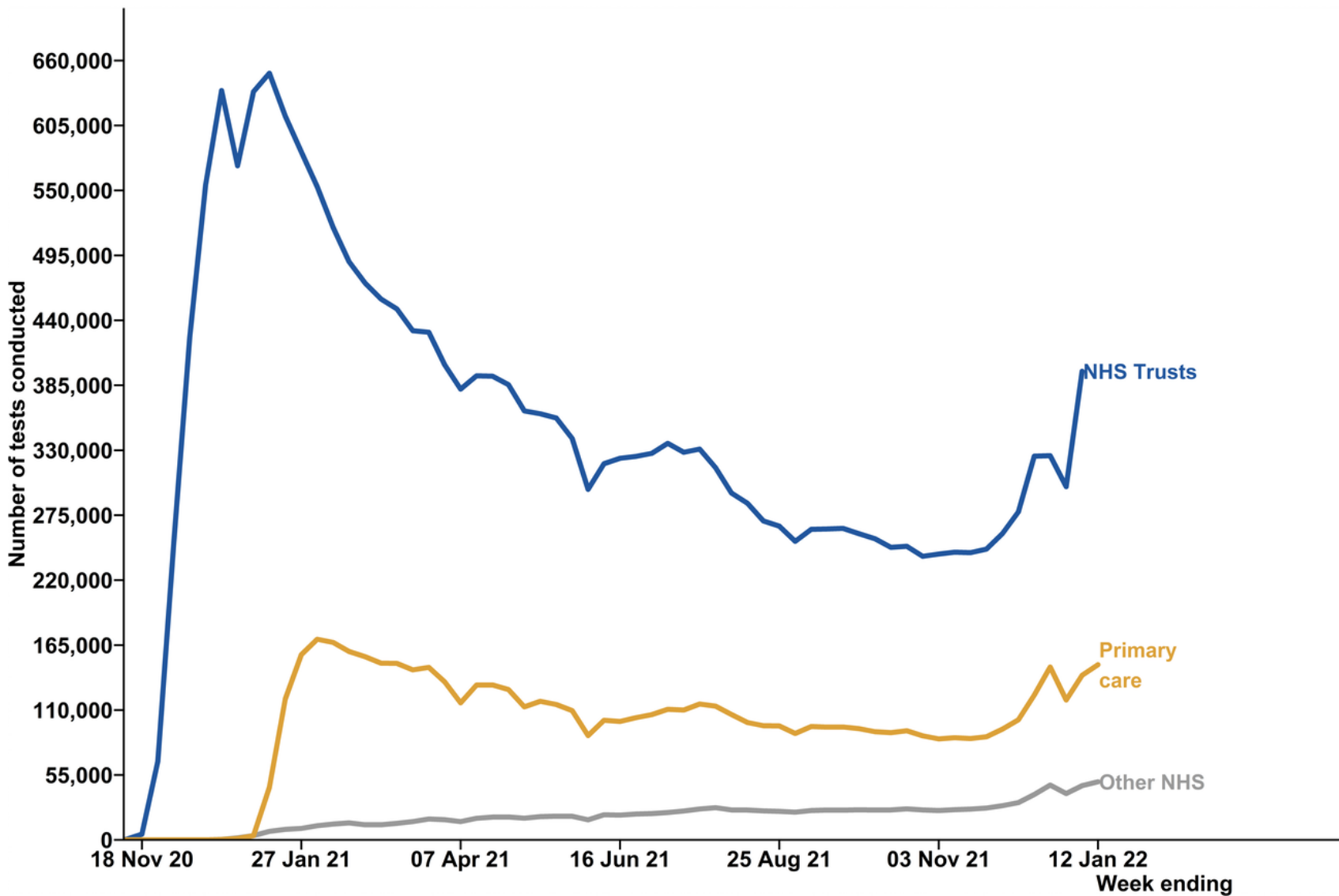
The number of LFD tests reported by staff in NHS trusts had been on a steady decline since January 2021 but have increased overall since mid-December. In the latest week (30 December 2021 to 5 January 2022), the number of LFD tests reported by staff in NHS trusts has increased to 396,890 from 299,124 tests in the previous week (23 December 2021 to 29 December 2021). Of the tests reported during the latest week, 17,616 tests were positive, an increase from 9,585 in the previous week.

## LFD tests reported by other NHS staff (including the independent sector)

Most tests reported by other NHS staff, include members of staff working in the independent sector who have also had access to twice weekly LFD testing. From August, the number of LFD tests reported by other NHS staff remained stable around 25,000 but since December they have increased. In the latest week ending 12 January 2022, 49,210 tests were conducted by other NHS employees which is an increase from 45,887 tests in the previous week (30 December 2021 to 5 January 2022). 1,823 positive test results were reported, a decrease from 2,066 in the previous week.

Within the NHS the majority of staff work in NHS trusts, followed by primary care and then the independent sector, hence testing volumes will reflect the number of staff working in each setting.

Figure 3. Number of LFD tests reported by primary care NHS staff, staff in NHS trusts and other NHS staff, England



This data can be found in the 'table\_13', 'table\_14' and 'table\_15' tabs of the 'NHS Test and Trace statistics, 28 May 2020 to 12 January 2022: data tables' document the [Weekly statistics for NHS Test and Trace](#) page.

## Tests conducted and registered to workplace settings, England

Asymptomatic testing, using rapid LFD tests, has been rolled out across private and public sector workplace settings as summarised in the table below.

The number of tests conducted in private sector workplace settings in this release is limited to test kits directly sent to the private companies which were registered. It does not include tests undertaken by private sector staff via a different route, for example at a regional or local test site or a mobile testing unit.

LFD testing via asymptomatic test sites at public sector workplaces was initially made available to organisations as part of a pilot before later expanding to include all workplaces that chose to sign up. Similarly, some public sector staff began self-reporting their test results at home during a 5-week trial period in March, after which self-reporting was expanded to all government departments. For more information see the [NHS Test and Trace methodology](#).

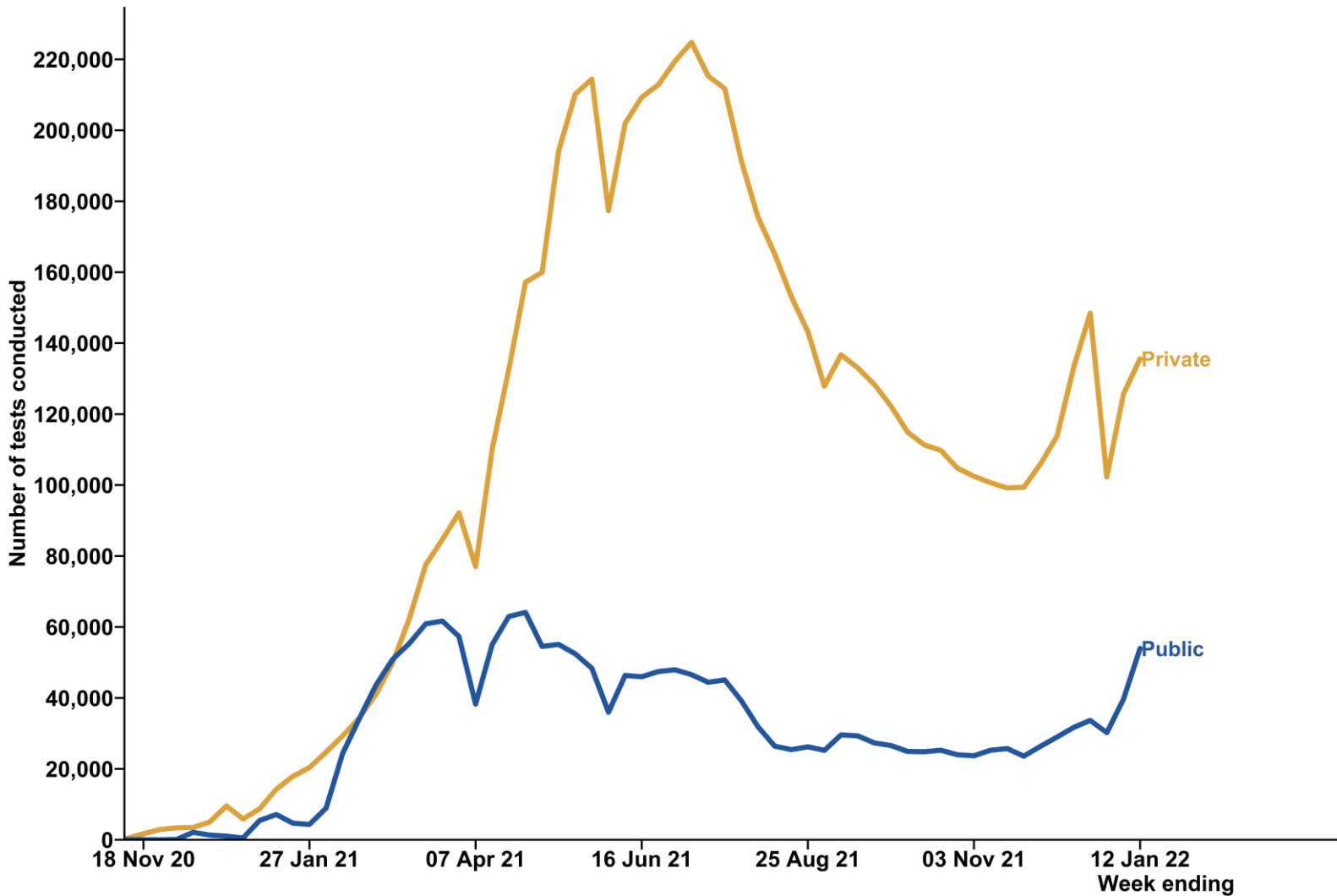
Sector	Dates	Frequency	Test kit
Private sector staff	5 November 2020 to present	Twice weekly	LFD (assisted)
	6 April 2021 to present	Twice weekly	LFD (self-report)
Public sector staff	November 2020 to present	Twice weekly	LFD (assisted)
	March 2021 to present	Twice weekly	LFD (self-report)

## LFD tests conducted and registered to private and public sector workplace settings

The number of LFD test conducted within private sector workplace settings has been on the decline from over 220,000 in the week beginning 1 July. In the latest week (6 January to 12 January 2022), 135,604 tests were reported which is an increase from 125,645 in the previous week. Of the tests conducted in the latest week 2,983 tests returned a positive result, a decrease from 3,946 in the previous week (30 December 2021 to 5 January 2022).

The number of LFD tests conducted in the public sector workplace settings has declined overall since it peaked at over 64,000 in the week beginning 22 April. In the latest week( 6 January to 12 January 2022), 53,947 LFD tests were conducted within public sector workplace settings. It is an increase from 39,626 in the previous week (30 December 2021 to 5 January 2022). Of the test conducted in the last week, 1,085 returned a positive result, a decrease from 1,244 positive tests in the previous week (30 December 2021 to 5 January 2022).

Figure 4. Number of LFD tests conducted and registered in private and public workplace settings, England



This data can be found in the 'table\_16' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 12 January 2022 data tables' the [Weekly statistics for NHS Test and Trace](#) page.



## About this data

Lateral flow device tests were first made available from 21 October 2020 in England. This data contains LFD tests reported through the existing National Testing Programme digital infrastructure and does not include LFD tests conducted where the tests were not registered via this route that is used to collect data for this report.

The following use cases for LFD tests are not currently reporting results digitally into Test and Trace systems, and therefore are excluded from this report:

- testing for some staff in private sector industries
- testing for some hauliers, these are published separately at [haulier coronavirus testing](#)

In these cases, test results should be reported directly into UK Health Security Agency. In future, all LFD tests will be reported via the existing National Testing Programme digital infrastructure and will be included.

A full explanation of the data sources and methods used to produce these statistics can be found in the [NHS Test and Trace methodology](#).

## Data quality

Given the importance of this service and the commitment of NHS Test and Trace to be open and transparent with the public it serves, this data is being released at the earliest possible opportunity. However, the caveats and data quality issues in this section should be taken into consideration when interpreting results, and this analysis should be taken in the wider context of [COVID-19 statistics](#).

An LFD test produces a result on the device almost immediately, without it being automatically recorded, therefore some results might not be captured. For settings where self-reporting LFD testing procedures<sup>2</sup> are in place, it is likely that the number of tests conducted are under-reported. It is however their statutory duty to do so, and easier reporting tools are being rolled out to support these individuals to report their tests as quickly and efficiently as possible. It is possible that tests with a negative result are more likely to be affected, therefore it is not advisable to calculate a positivity rate with the data.

Positive test results are not published as a proportion of the total number of tests conducted. There are several reasons why it is not advisable to calculate a positivity rate with this data:

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<sup>2</sup> Self-reporting LFDs are where the individual carrying out the test on themselves is expected to report their own test and subsequent result.

- the number of tests conducted is not deduplicated, which is the process of removing multiple results from the same person and refers to the number of tests taken and not the number of people tested. Because people can have more than one test, the number of tests conducted therefore cannot be compared with prevalence or case positivity rates
- rapid testing is primarily used for repeat testing of asymptomatic individuals and the frequency of testing varies across different settings, therefore positivity rates would not be directly comparable
- the potential underreporting of tests conducted by individuals self-reporting is likely to affect the proportion of negatives and positives thus skewing any positivity rate calculation

More information on data limitations and how the figures in this publication can and can't be used is outlined in the [NHS Test and Trace methodology](#).

## Future developments

We continue to explore the feasibility of adding new breakdowns to the publication on rapid testing to support user needs. Any future additions will be flagged here to signal forthcoming inclusion.

## About the UK Health Security Agency

UKHSA is responsible for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats. We provide intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage, to make the nation health secure.

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