Care Home COVID-19 Testing Guidance

Randox test kits

Randox test kits should not be used for testing until further notice.
For further information visit

This guidance is for all care homes without outbreaks and includes information about testing for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Before you do any testing

- Read this guidance in its entirety
- Make sure you have booked a courier collection by 7pm the day before you start testing. This can be arranged at www.carehomecollect.co.uk
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Introduction

Providing testing within all care homes will help you protect your residents and staff, and is an important part of the national effort to tackle coronavirus. Thank you for everything you are doing to help the country beat the virus at this hugely challenging time.

Order test kits via the online portal for care homes: [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://gov.uk/coronavirus)

Check which type of test kit you will be using

There are two types of test kits delivered to care homes, **Randox test kits** and all other types which are collectively referred to as **non-Randox test kits**.

Both test kits look very similar and test for whether someone currently has coronavirus in the same way. You will be told which test kits you will be using when you receive confirmation of your delivery.

*This guidance document is for Randox test kits.* If you are using non-Randox test kits please refer to the non-Randox guidance.

Prepare your care home for testing

This will help to ensure you are ready to test staff and residents on a regular basis. Make sure to test new residents and staff as soon as they join your care home. If residents develop symptoms test immediately, don’t wait for the next retesting cycle.

- Familiarise yourself with the guidance and instructions and assist your team to prepare by watching the instructional video for **over 65s and dementia** and **specialist** care homes and completing the online self-assessment tool.
- Discuss the testing approach with your residents and staff. Spend time preparing residents and explaining the procedure to them.
- Make sure that you obtain written consent.
- Review your personal protective equipment (PPE) supply and ensure you have the correct PPE to carry out testing.
- Ensure a proper workstation is available for preparing and packing the tests.
- Look out for the delivery confirmation email letting you know when tests will be delivered.
- Have a workflow to allow tests to be easily recorded, conducted and registered as swiftly as possible — it is recommended to have two staff members; one to conduct the test and the other to record the relevant information needed for registration.
- Make sure you have booked a courier collection by 7pm the day **before** you start testing. This can be arranged at [www.carehomecollect.co.uk](http://www.carehomecollect.co.uk)

If you have any questions please call 119

Lines open from 7am - 11pm daily

For people who have hearing or speech impairments, please call 18001 0300 303 2713
## Testing process overview

### Initial Order

**What to expect:** You will receive an email from care.home.portal.for.coronavirus.test.kits@notifications.service.gov.uk confirming your successful order of tests.

**What to do:** Start planning in advance so that you are ready to begin testing when the test kits are delivered to you:

- Read the instructions and watch the instruction video(s)
- Prepare a workflow and allocated work stations for testing
- Ensure you have enough of the appropriate PPE

There will be a delay between placing your order and confirming your delivery as we prioritise care home orders. Use the time to prepare your care home for testing.

### Delivery Confirmation

**What to expect:** You will receive a second email confirming the test kits are scheduled for delivery. Take this time to start preparing.

**What to do:** Make sure you:

- Communicate the testing plan to all staff and residents
- You should obtain consent to conduct the test from the resident in line with your usual policies and procedures. (more on page 8 - obtaining consent)
- Obtain agreement from staff to be tested, and schedule testing of staff taking into account shift patterns

### Receive test kits

**What to expect:** You will receive your delivery of test kits via courier after 10am.

**What to do:** Start preparing for testing

- Re-familiarise yourself and staff with the test instructions to prepare, collect and package the sample for each person being tested
- Prepare your test record templates and workstations for an easy testing and registration workflow
- Spend time preparing residents and explaining the procedure to them

Ensure that all test kits are stored safely at an ambient temperature. Do not refrigerate or leave in direct sunlight.

### Before testing

**What to expect:** You can book all your courier collections at once or you can book ad hoc courier collections as and when you plan to test.

**What to do:** Make sure that you have a confirmed courier collection for the day that you are due to start testing.

**Book a courier collection at least a day before testing (by no later than 7pm)**

### Testing days

**What to expect:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Testing days, on day(s) of your choice:</th>
<th>For EACH day of testing:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct your tests between 6am - 3pm.</td>
<td>• Take time to prepare yourself, your space, your residents and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop testing at 3pm to allow time for</td>
<td>• Follow the test instructions to prepare, collect and package the sample for each resident or staff member between 6am and 3pm</td>
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<td>packaging before courier collection.</td>
<td>• Note the barcode number and time of each test against the name of the person tested</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courier collection will take place</td>
<td>• Register the completed test online as close as possible to the time of the swab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 4pm and 10pm on each day you</td>
<td>• Courier collects completed test samples between 4pm and 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>have a booked collection.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Results

**What to expect:** You will receive the test results by email within 72 hours of test kits arriving at the laboratory

**What to do:**

- Notify, as appropriate, the resident, GP and family of the test result
- Take appropriate actions if the test result is positive or inconclusive
Who should be tested?

Testing should be done for the whole home.
Even where residents and staff are not symptomatic. Whole care home testing is about prevention rather than waiting until it is too late and having to deal with an outbreak.

Retesting
From 6 July onwards, we will start to roll out weekly testing of staff, as well as testing of residents every 28 days. We will initially prioritise care homes for over 65s and dementia and will expand to mixed and specialist care homes from early August.

Residents with or without symptoms
All residents should be tested, even those who have previously tested positive for Covid-19.

Residents who develop new symptoms should be tested immediately and should follow the existing self isolation guidance.

Individuals who have previously tested positive can be retested after six weeks or immediately if they develop an onset of new symptoms.

As far as possible, residents should be offered the choice to either self-administer the test on themselves or to have the test administered by a suitable member of staff. Children age 12-17 years old may choose to self administer the test with adult supervision, while children age 11 years and under should have the test administered by an adult.

If you choose not to conduct tests on symptomatic residents in your home, please notify your local health protection team.

Any individual who tests or retests positive for coronavirus should follow the existing guidance on isolation.

Staff without symptoms
All care home staff (including agency workers) without symptoms can be tested, even those who have previously tested positive for Covid-19.

Staff who previously tested positive can be retested after six weeks, or immediately if they develop an onset of new symptoms.

Staff with symptoms should NOT be tested in the care home
Staff with symptoms should instead be referred for testing at a regional / local test centre or in their own home. Please visit gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers to arrange a test.

Staff members should register the tests themselves to receive the test results directly, or may give consent to the care home to register and receive their test results. This consent should be given in writing. As test results are personal information no staff member should be compelled to provide consent.

COVID-19 Symptoms
COVID-19 symptoms include a new continuous cough and/or high temperature (>37.8 ℃) and/or loss of, or change to, sense of smell or taste. However, symptoms may be more subtle in older people in care homes who may present with Influenza Like Illness (ILI), shortness of breath, new onset confusion, reduced alertness, reduced mobility, or diarrhoea and sometimes do not develop fever. This may be true for COVID-19, so such changes should alert staff to the possibility of new COVID-19 infection. Please refer to the latest guidance online for up to date guidance on symptoms.
Booking your courier collection

Please read the below instructions that describe how to arrange a courier collection before you start testing.

Please book your courier collection via carehomecollect.co.uk

Arranging your test kit courier collection:

1. Once you have planned for when to do testing book your courier collection at www.carehomecollect.co.uk

2. Make sure that you have your CQC reference number and care home email address ready and follow the steps on screen to arrange your courier.
   Note: you have until 7pm to arrange a next day courier collection

3. Receive your courier collection confirmation email

4. Conduct testing between 6am and 3pm on the day your courier has been arranged (see page 8 for more information about testing)

5. Package your test kits up before 4pm using one of the empty boxes you will have received with your test kit delivery and add the UN3373 label to the box

6. The courier will collect completed kits from you between 4pm and 10pm on the day you have selected

Tests must be picked up on the same day they are taken

Why courier timing is important:
There is a 48 hour window to get a swab sample to the laboratory for processing. If this window is missed, there is a high chance that the individual may not get their results and a retest may be required at a later time.

You will be able to book multiple collections, but please make sure that you only test on a day where you have a confirmed courier scheduled to collect your test kits that same day between 4pm and 10pm.

If you have received test kits for testing in your care home from any other source (for example directly from Public Health England or your local Clinical Commissioning Group), please keep these tests separate and do not return these tests with the same courier.

Important
Please only test on a day that you have a confirmed courier collection arranged.

If you have any questions please call 119
Lines open from 7am - 11pm daily

For people who have hearing or speech impairments, please call 18001 0300 303 2713
If you are administering the tests for others

Follow these instructions found at the back of this guidance.

If you are self-swabbing

Follow the printed Randox instructions that are included with each test kit. Please ignore the postal instructions, instead follow the courier collection guidance for care homes (see page 14).
1 Prepare for testing

Learn how to conduct the test

To ensure that tests are carried out safely, you must ensure that suitably competent staff conduct the tests. Every person involved in conducting the test in your care home MUST read the detailed instructions provided and watch the instructional videos for elderly and specialist care homes before conducting the swab test. Residents who would prefer to self administer the test on themselves should watch this self-swabbing instruction video, as should staff. Staff are expected to self swab.

If a test isn’t correctly undertaken it may lead to inaccurate test results.

It is recommended that staff complete the COVID-19 Care Home Swabbing Online Individual Competency Assessment to improve the success of the swab test. It is quick and easy to use and follows on from the above video. Individuals can register at www.genqa.org/carehomes and will be given a login for immediate use. Alternatively care home managers can create an organisational account and arrange this centrally. Please contact info@genqa.org to set this up.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

We recommend that you share with your staff, and follow, the current guidance from Public Health England on how to work safely in care homes and this short video guide on putting on and removing PPE. You should not conduct any tests if you don’t have the correct PPE.

PPE is not needed for people who are self swabbing.

Obtaining Consent

You should obtain consent to conduct the test from the resident, consulting family members and their GP as appropriate and in line with your usual policies and procedures. Some residents, for example some people with dementia, learning disabilities or mental health conditions, may lack the relevant mental capacity to make a decision about their own testing. If the person lacks the relevant mental capacity to consent to the test, and they are aged 16 or over, you should consider if the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 allow you to make a ‘best interests decision’ to swab and receive results, on their behalf.

As far as possible, residents should be offered the choice to either self-administer the test on themselves or to have the test administered by a suitable member of staff. Likewise, the resident should be offered the choice to receive the results directly (rather than via the registered manager on their behalf), in which case you should follow the same process set out in this guidance but using the resident’s contact details to register the test online.

Obtain written agreement for all staff to be tested and how the results will be shared. For example, directly with the staff member or to the care home directly via the care home manager.
Swabs should be taken between 6am and 3pm for collection by courier between 4pm and 10pm the same day

This ensures that night shift staff can be tested at the end of their shift, and ensures tests are delivered to the laboratory within 48 hours of collecting each sample.

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Before Testing

1. Book your courier collection by 7pm the day before testing at the latest

Testing Day

2. Take swab samples
3. Package test kits
4. Collection by courier

Register completed tests

If you can’t test everyone in one day you can book more courier collections

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It is recommended you have two colleagues conduct the test

One recording the test, and the other swabbing the resident. This ensures that there is no cross contamination between the test materials and the materials you are using to record the information.

Have a clean workstation for test preparation.

Preparing your resident for testing

Take a moment to reassure the resident to help them feel more comfortable while you perform the test. Follow local guidance on obtaining consent for the test.

Check nasal passages for any recent nasal surgery or abnormalities, cuts or injuries that would make swabbing difficult. Have the resident gently blow their nose and cough into a tissue to dispose of any excess mucus, and dispose of the tissue immediately in a bin.
## Conduct testing

### Combined nose and throat swabbing

**Where possible a combined nose and throat swab should be taken.** However a person-centred approach should be used to assess which sample to take from each resident.

Taking a throat swab is more invasive than taking a nose swab and can be uncomfortable. To take a throat swab safely, the person being swabbed needs to be able to understand and comply with instructions, including having the ability to maintain their mouth wide open for the period of the swabbing. This can be difficult not only for people with advanced dementia, but also for those with limited strength due to severe frailty.

**Where a combined nose and throat swab is not possible, a nose swab from both nostrils should be taken,** if this is feasible. The swab does not need to be pushed far into the nostril. Extra care is needed when interpreting the results from a nasal swab compared to a full throat and nose swab. If the result is negative but the resident has persistent symptoms, a clinical assessment should be made to determine whether a repeat test is required. Isolation should continue until symptoms reside.

### Unused test kits and further testing

Any residual test kits not used should be retained by the care home for future ad hoc tests if required. **Please do not return unused test kits with the courier even if they insist.**

Store test kits in a safe place with an ambient temperature of between 5 and 22 degrees Celsius.

Retesting is currently being rolled out to over 65s and dementia care homes. These homes should follow a regular retesting cycle by testing staff every week and retesting residents every 28 days. Use any spare test kits to test new residents and staff as soon as they join your care home. If any residents develop symptoms test immediately, don’t wait for the next retesting cycle.

Book a courier collection for any tests (ad hoc or planned) via [www.carehomecollect.co.uk](http://www.carehomecollect.co.uk). Make sure you book the courier first and then test on the same day as the courier collection. It is important to test on the same day as courier collection as once a test has been used it must be tested by the lab within 48 hours of swabbing or the test will become void.
Record swab samples

When you conduct the swab test, you must register each completed test online (see separate instructions in this pack). This will record the URN or barcode of each swab against the name and details of the individual who has been tested. This will also enable you to receive the test results back by email within 72 hours of the test arriving at the laboratory. You should monitor your email account carefully.

Ensure that each swab sample is clearly recorded against the correct resident details.
Extra care should be taken when more than one swab is being collected in the home from residents and staff. You should follow these steps:

• If possible, complete each test in full on a patient by patient basis including swabbing, packaging and record keeping, before moving on to the next person.

• Please use the suggested record keeping template to capture the personal information of those being tested alongside the barcode or URN number of the test. To help with record keeping, you should prepare the personal information of those being tested ahead of testing. As you test individuals, update the record keeping template with the date, time and associated barcode of the test, and then use this to register the test online (see separate instructions in this pack).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of resident</th>
<th>Date of birth</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Symptoms (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Test kit URN or barcode</th>
<th>Date of swab test</th>
<th>Time of swab test</th>
<th>Time registered online</th>
<th>Time of courier collection</th>
<th>Test result</th>
<th>Date resident (or family) informed of test result</th>
<th>Date CP informed of test result</th>
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Register completed tests online

It is crucial that you register each completed test online at www.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/care-home

This registration process is essential, as without it, the laboratory will not be able to provide you with the test results. Note that you must complete this on the SAME DAY that you conduct the swab testing and as close as possible to the time that the swab is taken.

Once you have successfully registered each test you will receive a confirmation email or text message. You will receive the rest results by email within 72 hours of the test arriving at the laboratory. You should monitor your email account carefully. Registered managers should not use a personal email or phone number to receive test results for any residents or staff.

When you receive the test result email, this may not include the name of the resident or staff member. You should therefore retain a careful record of each test URN/barcode and the name of the resident or staff member. Staff members should also retain a record of their own test URN/barcode.

What you will need to register your test online:

1. CARE HOME ID:
   - in England: enter your CQC location ID (it looks like this: ‘1-123456789’)
   - in Wales: enter your service URN (it looks like this: ‘SIN-12345678-abcd’)
   - in Northern Ireland: enter your RQIA number (it looks like this: ‘1234’)
   - in Scotland: enter your Care Inspectorate number (it looks like this: ‘CS1234567890’)

2. ENTER THE TEST BARCODE: Enter the 11 character reference below the barcode on your test kit, or scan the barcode using your phone or computer camera. Take care to double check that this number is correct.

3. FIRST AND LAST NAME: Of the person who has been tested

4. STAFF OR RESIDENT: Select Staff or Resident.

5. SYMPTOMS: Indicate whether the person being tested is experiencing symptoms at the time the test is taken

6. GENDER AND DATE OF BIRTH: Of the person who has been tested

7. EMAIL AND PHONE OF THE PERSON WHO SHOULD RECEIVE THE TEST RESULTS: i.e. the resident or staff member. In certain cases it may be more appropriate for the registered manager to receive the test results on behalf of residents and, in exceptional circumstances staff, if consent has been obtained. Registered managers should not use a personal email or phone number and must ensure that written consent has been obtained via usual policies and procedures. As test results are personal information no resident or staff member should be compelled to provide consent.

8. POSTCODE: This will be the care home address (for residents) or a home address (for staff members).

9. NHS NUMBER: Of the person who has been tested, if available (not required)
Where a registered manager is receiving the test results on behalf of a resident:

The registered manager should not use a personal email or phone number to receive test results for any residents.

When you receive the test result email, this may not include the name of the resident. You should therefore retain a careful record of each test URN/barcode and the name of the resident.

All test results for residents should be notified to the resident, their GP and family (if appropriate).

When you receive the test results you should follow the national guidance for care homes.

All staff should follow the Public Health Guidance in this document and refer to the full national guidance online.
Securely package and give the completed tests to the courier

Package your test kits before 4pm

Use one of the empty boxes you will have received with your test kit delivery and add the UN3373 label to the box

The courier will collect completed test kits from you between 4pm and 10pm on the day you have selected.

Tests must be picked up on the same day they are taken

There is a 48 hour window to get a swab sample to the lab for processing. If this window is missed, there is a high chance that the individual may not get their results and a retest may be required at a later time.

You will be able to book multiple collections, but please make sure that you only test on a day where you have a confirmed courier scheduled to collect your test kits that same day between 4pm and 10pm.

If you have received test kits for testing in your care home from any other source (for example directly from Public Health England or your local Clinical Commissioning Group), please keep these tests separate and do not return these tests with the same courier.

If there is a problem with your courier collection

If your courier has not collected your test kits by 10pm, please email COVIDCareHomeTesting@dhsc.gov.uk or call the helpline number at the bottom of this page to request an urgent collection the following morning. You will receive an email confirmation of your revised collection time.

If the courier arrives before 4pm and your test kits are not yet ready for collection, please politely ask the courier to wait or return at 4pm the same day.

If you have any other problems with your delivery or collection that are not addressed above, please email COVIDCareHomeTesting@dhsc.gov.uk or call the helpline number at the bottom of this page.
Further Advice

Early reporting of a coronavirus outbreak in your care home

You should report any suspected coronavirus outbreak (two or more residents or staff cases within 14 days with confirmed or suspect COVID-19 infection) to your local health protection team.

You can find contact details of your local health protection team here.

Support with conducting tests in your care home

If you have any questions regarding conducting tests on residents in your home, please call the Contact Centre for advice (phone number at the bottom of this page).

If you require assistance with conducting the tests in your home (swabbing of residents and/or staff), training and advice can be sought via the local Clinical Commissioning Group Director of Nursing, in the same way that infection control training is being accessed.

Further support from Public Health England

If you are experiencing difficulties with implementing the above guidance, or if you are experiencing a significant increase in new cases or deaths or any other serious problems, you should contact your local health protection team.

You can find contact details of your local health protection team here.

Further guidance for care homes

For the latest information and guidance on self-isolation and test results see the Public Health England guidance. This will continue to be updated regularly.

COVID-19: our action plan for adult social care

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for care staff supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults

How to get tests for residents, staff and those receiving care at home: Coronavirus testing for adult social care
Need help?
If you have any questions or problems with this test kit, please call us.

Helpdesk number **119**.
Lines are open everyday, 7am to 11pm.

It is free of charge from any mobile or landline.

Thank you for supporting us.
Care Home COVID-19 Testing Instructions

For administering the test to others

If you have any questions please call 119
Lines open from 7am - 11pm daily

For people who have hearing or speech impairments, please call 18001 0300 303 2713
Wash your hands and put on the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
Wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds, using soap and warm water. Make sure you wear your mask, visor, gloves, and apron when testing.

Clean surfaces
Clean and dry a surface to place the test kit on. Unpack everything from the kit onto the clean surface.

Find the tonsils (back of the throat)
Look inside the person’s mouth and find their tonsils. This is the area where you will take the swab sample. You can use a torch to help.
If tonsils were removed, swab where they would have been at the back of the throat.

Ask the person to gently blow their nose and cough into a tissue.
This is so excess mucus does not interfere with the test. Throw the tissue away in a closed bin.

Open the swab inside sealed wrapper
Open the package and carefully take out the swab. You’ll use it for both the throat and nose.

Important
The fabric tip of the swab must not touch anything apart from the tonsils, back of throat and nose. If it touches anything else, use a new swab.

Take the throat sample
Holding the swab in your hand, open the person’s mouth wide and gently rub the swab over both tonsils and the back of the throat for 10 seconds (use a torch and/or mirror to help you do this).

Important
You will use the same swab for both the throat and nose. This may be uncomfortable, and they may feel like gagging, but it should not hurt. Take care not to touch their tongue, teeth, or gums, or any other surfaces with the swab.
If it is too difficult to do a throat swab take a swab from both nostrils instead, but only as a last resort.

Take the nose sample
Put the same end of the same swab gently into the nostril by about 2.5cm (1 inch) or until you feel some resistance.
Rotate the swab for 10-15 seconds and slowly remove it.

Important
This may feel uncomfortable. Do not insert the swab any deeper if there is strong resistance or pain.
8. Place swab into plastic vial
Make sure the fabric tip is facing down as you place it into the vial. Snap off the stick end, so that it fits inside the vial without bending.

9. Securely fasten the lid
The lid should screw on and fit securely.
If the swab stick is too long still, you may need to use scissors to cut it to size. Clean and dry the scissors first.
Securely fasten the lid on the vial. Make sure the lid is securely fastened and sealed so that no liquid can leak.

10. Stick barcode onto the plastic vial
Peel off one of the barcode labels, and stick it vertically along the length of the plastic vial.
If there is already a label on the plastic vial, place your barcode label on top of it.

11. Place vial into outer transportation tube
Place the plastic vial in the transportation tube and seal with the lid provided.

12. Place transportation tube into the pathoseal bag
Then place the transportation tube into the larger biohazard pathoseal bag. Remove the metallic silver strip and seal the bag with the blue adhesive strips.

13. Stick barcode onto pathoseal bag
Peel off one of the identical barcode labels and stick it onto the outside, along the length of the sealed biohazard bag.
You should have 1 spare barcode left over. You can use this in case you have labelled the packaging incorrectly, or for your own test record template.
Barcode #1: Stick on plastic vial
Barcode #2: Stick on biohazard bag
Barcode #3: Spare OR Stick to test record keeping template

14. Fill out the test record and keep for your records
You can choose to fill in the test record template with personal information of those being tested, before you start testing, or ask a colleague to fill in this information while you carry out the test. Your colleague should also record the barcode number and the time of the swab as the test is conducted. This is to ensure that you avoid touching anything while testing.
You can stick one of the barcodes to the test record template to make the administration process easier and to help ensure that the test is connected to the right individual.

Important
Change your apron and gloves each time you do a test. Throw these away in a closed bin.
Finish testing by 3pm each day to allow time to package your completed tests securely using the packaging provided. Courier collection will take place between 4pm and 10pm.
Make sure you record the individual’s information correctly on the test record and match them with their test barcode.
Register the completed test online as soon as possible at test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/care-home