

# Weekly statistics for rapid asymptomatic testing in England: 17 June to 23 June 2021

## Introduction

This statistical publication provides information on rapid testing for people without COVID-19 symptoms in England. This includes:

- the number of LFD tests and confirmatory PCR tests conducted by test result
- the number of LFD tests conducted linked to education settings
- the number of LFD and PCR tests conducted in care homes
- the number of LFD tests conducted by NHS staff
- the number of LFD tests conducted in private 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 collection 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](#).

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.

# 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 temporarily 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](#).

## LFD tests conducted, England<sup>1</sup>

Between 18 February and 17 March 2021, the number of LFD tests conducted and reported rose sharply, peaking at just over 7.6 million, which coincided with the return of secondary students to school. Following that peak, the number of LFD tests conducted and reported reduced sharply in the week commencing 1 April, to just over 4 million. The reduction coincided with the end of spring term in schools. Between 8 April and 21 April, the number of LFD tests increased following the start of summer term and the introduction of universal testing.

The number of LFD tests conducted has increased to 4,761,412 in the latest week (17 to 23 June 2021) compared to 4,543,496 tests in the previous week. Of the LFD tests conducted and reported in the latest week (17 to 23 June 2021), 22,789 tests returned a positive result, an increase from 16,469 tests in the previous week (10 to 16 June 2021), and in the same period 4,733,609 tests returned a negative result, an increase from 4,522,331 tests in the previous week. Since LFD tests were introduced, 235,873 positive results and 100,646,179 negative results have been reported.

In comparison, 1,349,708 PCR tests were conducted in the latest week (17 to 23 June 2021), which is an increase from 1,155,537 tests in the previous week. In the latest week, 62,395 PCR tests were returned positive in comparison with 45,153 positive tests in the previous week. This is an increase of 17,242 positive tests from the previous week.

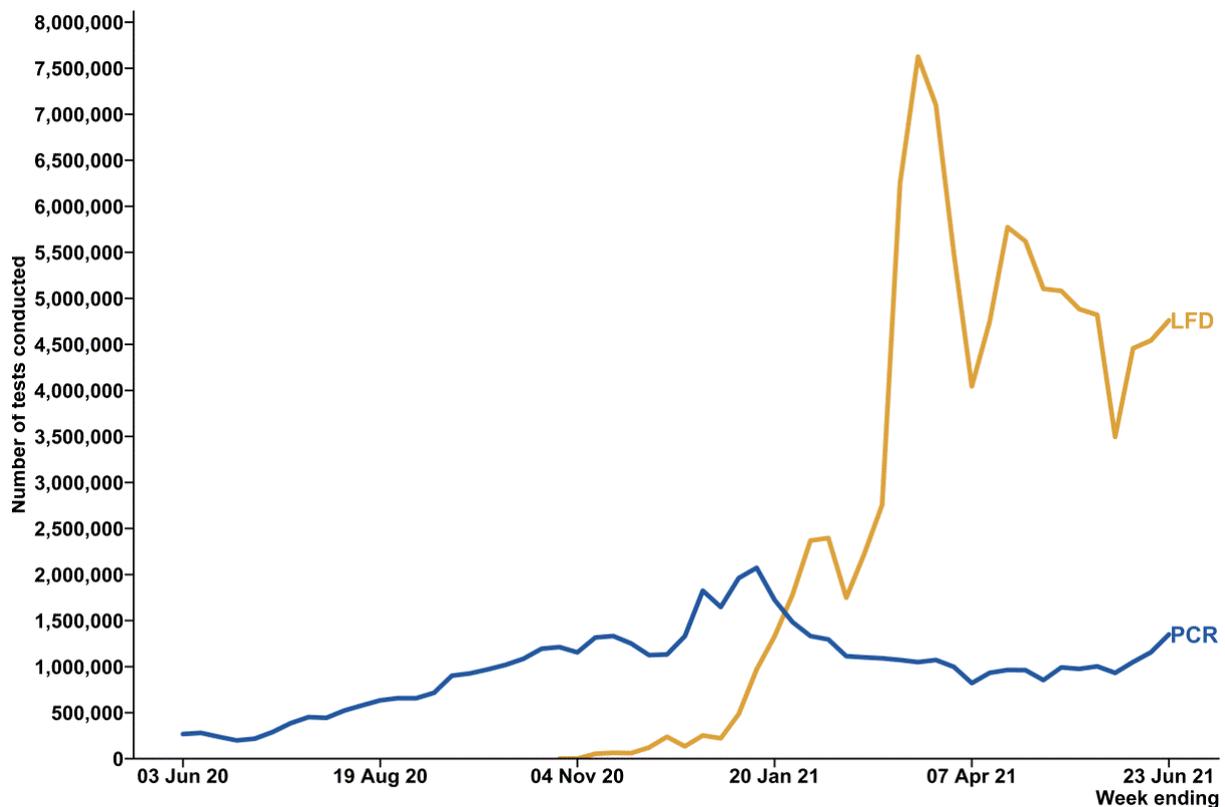
PCR and LFD tests have different uses and are therefore applied in different situations (see the 'Types of tests' section above for more information). The primary purpose of rapid LFD testing is to identify people with COVID-19 who do not have symptoms. As the number of LFD tests conducted increases, more asymptomatic positive cases are identified earlier and therefore they are less likely to transmit the virus to their contacts.

**The total number of LFD tests conducted and reported does not include tests taken by staff in NHS trusts as they report via a different route.** These figures are reported separately in the section for tests conducted by staff in NHS trusts and have an additional week's time lag (because they are collated weekly by trusts). The data therefore cannot be combined on a weekly basis to give an overall total number of LFD tests conducted.

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<sup>1</sup> Counts of LFD tests conducted do not include tests which weren't reported through the National Testing Programme digital infrastructure. The majority of those not included are tests taken by staff in NHS trusts which are reported separately in the publication.

**Figure 1: number of LFD and PCR tests conducted, England**



This data can be found in the 'table\_1' and 'table\_3' tabs of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021 data tables' on the [weekly collection page](#).

## Confirmatory PCR tests

In the latest week ending 23 June, 848 positive LFD test results were reported from an asymptomatic test site, of which 499 were matched to a confirmatory PCR test<sup>2</sup>. Of those 499 matched PCR tests, 445 (89%) were positive. For self-reported LFD tests, 21,941 positive test results were reported, of which 15,761 were matched to a confirmatory PCR test. Of those 15,761 matched PCR tests, 13,686 (87%) were positive. The remaining PCR tests were negative or void, however there are multiple reasons why an LFD test result and a PCR test result might differ, these are listed in the section below.

Since 9 April 2021, LFD tests have been made available to everyone and anyone who receives a positive test result is advised to take a confirmatory PCR test. Historically, LFD testing was provided only in specific settings, with differences in the groups of individuals tested and the frequency of testing. The confirmatory PCR rate

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<sup>2</sup> The number of LFD tests not matched to a confirmatory PCR test include those where a confirmatory PCR test was not taken within 3 days of the LFD test, or where the LFD test could not be matched to a PCR test in the data.

is likely to differ across these various LFD test settings and we intend to publish more information on this in the future.

**Figures for confirmatory PCR tests taken after a positive LFD test result at an asymptomatic test site (assisted) are also published in the accompanying data tables.**

There are a number of possible reasons why the results of the initial LFD and the confirmatory PCR may be different:

- issues in correctly reading or recording the result for LFDs, leading to reporting a positive result when it was negative.
- the initial LFD may have incorrectly returned a positive result, which occurs in less than 1 in 1,000 tests.
- the confirmatory PCR may have incorrectly returned a negative result which can occur if the sampling technique was poor. More information on false negatives in PCR testing can be found here: [GOS: Impact of false positives and negatives](#)
- the time delay between the taking of the two tests means that it is possible for an individual to have correctly tested positive when they took the LFD and then correctly negative when they took the PCR. Of all the confirmatory PCRs identified for self-reported LFDs, 85% were taken within one day of the LFD test meaning this is unlikely to be the reason for the negative confirmatory PCR test.

The data presented here is in line with previously published analysis by NHS Test and Trace on lateral flow device specificity, which shows LFD tests have a specificity of at least 99.9%. This means that for every 1,000 lateral flow tests carried out, there is fewer than one false positive result. The number of false positives as a proportion of all positive results varies depending on the prevalence of COVID-19 within the populations being tested – the higher the level of prevalence, the lower the probability that a positive result will be a false positive. For more technical information on LFD tests and false positives see NHS Test and Trace statistics methodology.

## LFD tests conducted as part of testing in education, England

The rapid testing operation has been rolled out differently across the different education settings, as summarised in the table below. For more information see the [NHS Test and Trace statistics methodology](#).

|                                       | <b>Testing started</b> | <b>Frequency</b>   | <b>Group tested</b>                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Primary schools and nurseries</b>  | 18 January 2021        | Twice a week   | Staff  |
|                                       | 1 March 2021           | Twice a week   | Households and bubbles of staff and students |
| <b>Secondary schools and colleges</b> | 4 January 2021         | Once a week then increased to twice a week                         | Staff and students*                          |
|                                       | 8 March 2021           | Three tests on return (spaced 3 to 5 days apart) then twice a week | Students                                     |
|                                       | 1 March 2021           | Twice a week   | Households and bubbles of staff and students |
| <b>Higher education</b>               | 27 November 2020       | Twice before leaving and twice on return                           | Staff and students                           |
|                                       | 25 January 2021        | Twice a week   | Staff and students                           |

\*Students in this time period only included children of critical workers and those in vulnerable groups who were currently attending school.

Between 27 January and 30 March 2021, staff, students, household bubbles and support bubbles who tested positive after using a home LFD test kit were required to take a confirmatory PCR test, and those who tested positive from an LFD test taken at an on-site test centre did not. From 30 March 2021, the requirement to take a confirmatory PCR test was reinstated for all positive LFD tests. For more information on the testing methods for the different phases of education see the [NHS Test and Trace statistics methodology](#).

## LFD tests conducted by phase of education

The number of LFD tests conducted within primary schools and nurseries increased to peak at over 1 million in the week beginning 18 March 2021. In the latest week ending 23 June, the number of tests conducted has increased to 747,356 compared to 714,123 tests in the previous week. 1,996 positive test results were returned in the latest week within primary schools and nurseries, an increase from 1,296 positive results in the previous week.

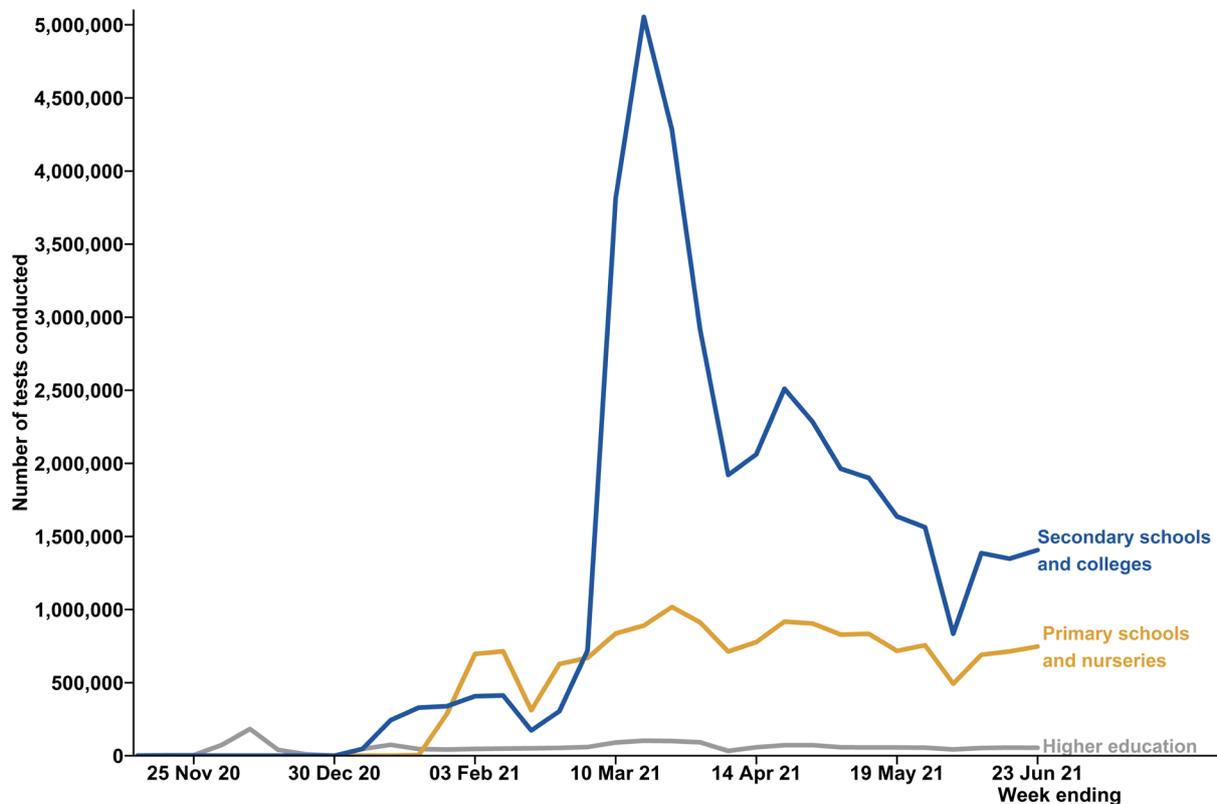
Similarly, within secondary schools and colleges, the number of LFD tests conducted increased steeply to over 5.7 million in the week beginning 11 March which coincided with the return to schools. In the latest week (17 to 23 June 2021), the number of tests has increased to 1,425,914 compared to 1,364,238 in the previous week. In the same period, the number of positive test results has increased in the latest week to 4,452 compared to 3,144 in the previous week.

The total number of LFD tests taken in secondary schools and colleges includes tests not registered. The full breakdown of tests registered and not registered in secondary schools and colleges is available in 'table 7' of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021 data tables' on the [weekly collection page](#).

Since the week beginning 29 April, the number of LFD tests conducted in higher education has remained between 40,000 and 60,000. In the latest week (17 to 23 June 2021) 54,335 LFD tests were conducted in higher education, which is a decrease from 55,823 tests in the previous week. There has been an increase in positive results in higher education in the latest week, with 401 positive test results returned compared with 322 in previous week.

**The number of positive test results is not published as a proportion of the total tests conducted due to the data quality. In addition, because there are differences in the testing operation between the different phases of education, they cannot be directly compared. See the 'data quality' section for more information.**

**Figure 2: number of LFD tests conducted in education, by phase of education, England**



This data can be found in the 'table\_7' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021 data tables' on the [weekly collection page](#).

## LFD tests conducted by secondary school students

Upon their return to school from 8 March, secondary school students were tested for COVID-19 at school-specific asymptomatic test sites (assisted), with each student asked to take 3 tests spaced 3 to 5 days apart. Those students who received a positive LFD test result were not asked to take a confirmatory PCR test. After these first 3 tests, students begin twice weekly LFD testing at home (self-reported), for which they are advised to take a confirmatory PCR test within 2 days if they receive a positive result.

In the latest week ending 23 June, 754,169 LFD tests were taken by students in secondary schools which is an increase from 713,458 tests in the previous week. Of these, 33,181 tests were assisted at a test site and 720,988 tests were self-reported.

In the latest week ending 23 June, 2,904 positive LFD tests were received by secondary school students, of which 27 were assisted at a test site and 2,877 were

self-reported<sup>3</sup>. Of those which were self-reported, 2,201 were matched to a confirmatory PCR test<sup>4</sup> and 1,845 (84%) received a subsequent positive PCR test result, the remaining 356 (16%) were negative or void.

**Figures for confirmatory PCR tests taken by secondary school students after a positive LFD test result at an asymptomatic test site (assisted) are also published in the accompanying data tables.** These figures show the number of positive LFD tests reported by students both at an asymptomatic test site and via a home test, has increased in the latest week. The advice for an individual to take a confirmatory PCR test after a positive LFD test result was reinstated for all positive LFD tests from 30 March 2021. Therefore, the confirmatory PCR data for those assisted LFD tests taken at asymptomatic test sites cannot be directly compared across the full time period or to those taken at home before 30 March 2021.<sup>5</sup>

There are a number of possible reasons why the results of the initial LFD and the confirmatory PCR may be different. These are listed in the confirmatory PCR section earlier in the publication.

## **LFD tests conducted by staff, household bubbles and support bubbles**

In the latest week ending 23 June, 370,010 LFD tests were taken by staff in secondary schools, an increase from the 359,820 in the previous week. Similarly, the number of tests taken by staff in primary schools and nurseries has also increased to 596,524 tests, from 585,323 tests in the previous week.

274,253 tests were taken by individuals that belong to a household bubble of a student or staff member at school or nursery and 30,472 were taken by individuals in their support bubbles. The number of tests conducted by household bubbles and support bubbles have each increased in comparison to the previous week.

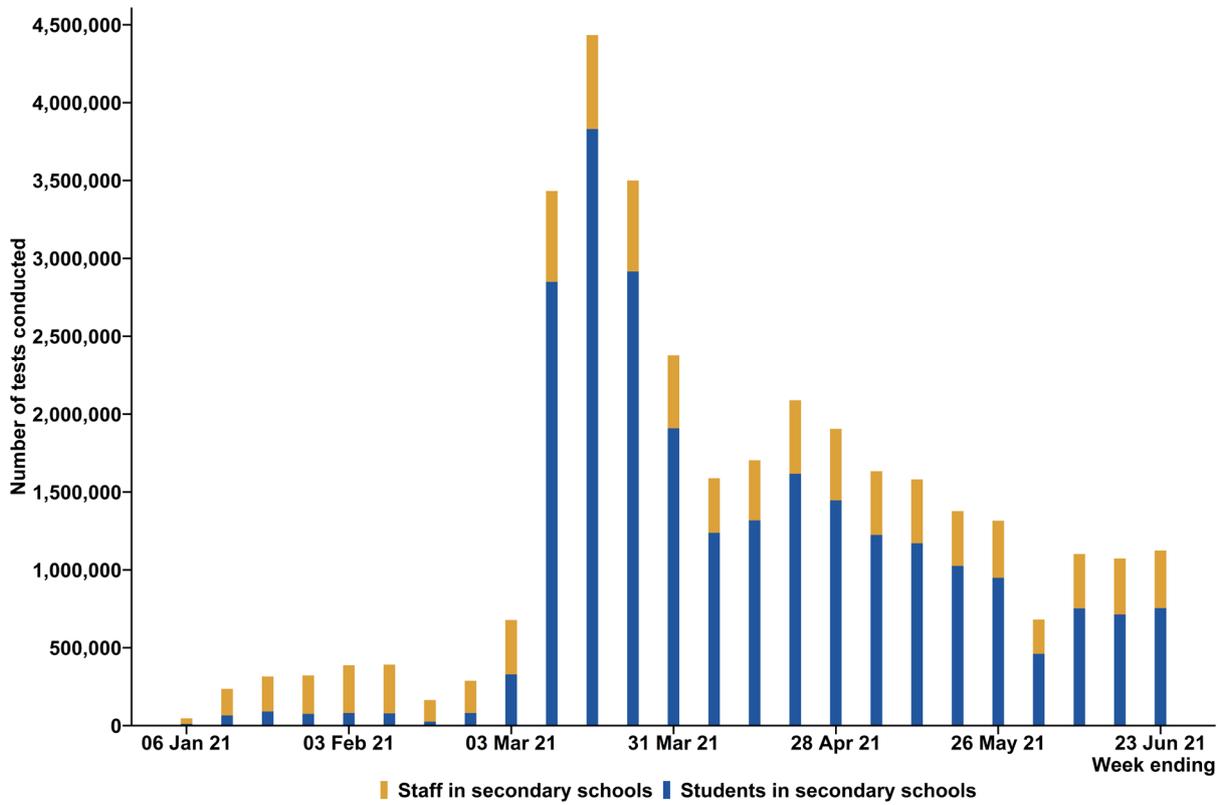
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<sup>3</sup> The number positive LFD tests returned by secondary school students published by whether they were self-reported or assisted at an ATS will not sum to the total number of LFD positives for secondary school students as published in 'table\_8'. This is because the two data cuts are currently taken at slightly different times.

<sup>4</sup> The number of LFD tests not matched to a confirmatory PCR test includes those where a confirmatory PCR test was not taken within 3 days of the LFD test, or where the LFD test could not be matched to a PCR test in the data.

<sup>5</sup> The data for confirmatory PCRs for LFDs taken at school-specific asymptomatic test sites can be found in the 'table\_9' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021 data tables' on the [weekly collection page](#).

**Figure 3: number of LFD tests conducted by staff and students in secondary schools, England**



This data can be found in the 'table\_8' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021 data tables' on the [weekly collection page](#).

## 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.

The number of tests conducted in care homes includes staff, residents and visitors tested via test kits directly sent to the care home which were registered. It will not include care home staff, residents, 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 statistics methodology](#).

|  | Dates                       | Frequency   | Test Kit |
|--|-----------------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Care home residents</b>                               | 7 June 2020 to present      | Monthly<br><br>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      |
| <b>Care home staff</b>                                   | 7 June 2020 to present      | Weekly<br><br>In the event of an outbreak: day 1 and between days 4 to 7                                    | PCR      |
|  | 23 December 2020 to present | Twice weekly<br><br>In the event of a positive case in the care home: daily until 5 days without a positive | LFD      |
| <b>Care home indoor visitors</b>                         | 8 March 2021 to present     | Weekly – essential care givers  | PCR      |
|  | 8 March 2021 to present     | Twice weekly – essential care givers  | LFD      |
|  | 2 December 2020 to present* | On arrival  | LFD      |
| <b>Care home visiting professionals – CQC inspectors</b> | 14 December 2020 to present | Weekly  | PCR      |

|   |                             |   |     |
|---|-----------------------------|---|-----|
|   | 22 March 2021 to present    | Before visit  | LFD |
| <b>Care home visiting professionals – all other professionals</b> | 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 statistics methodology](#) for more information.

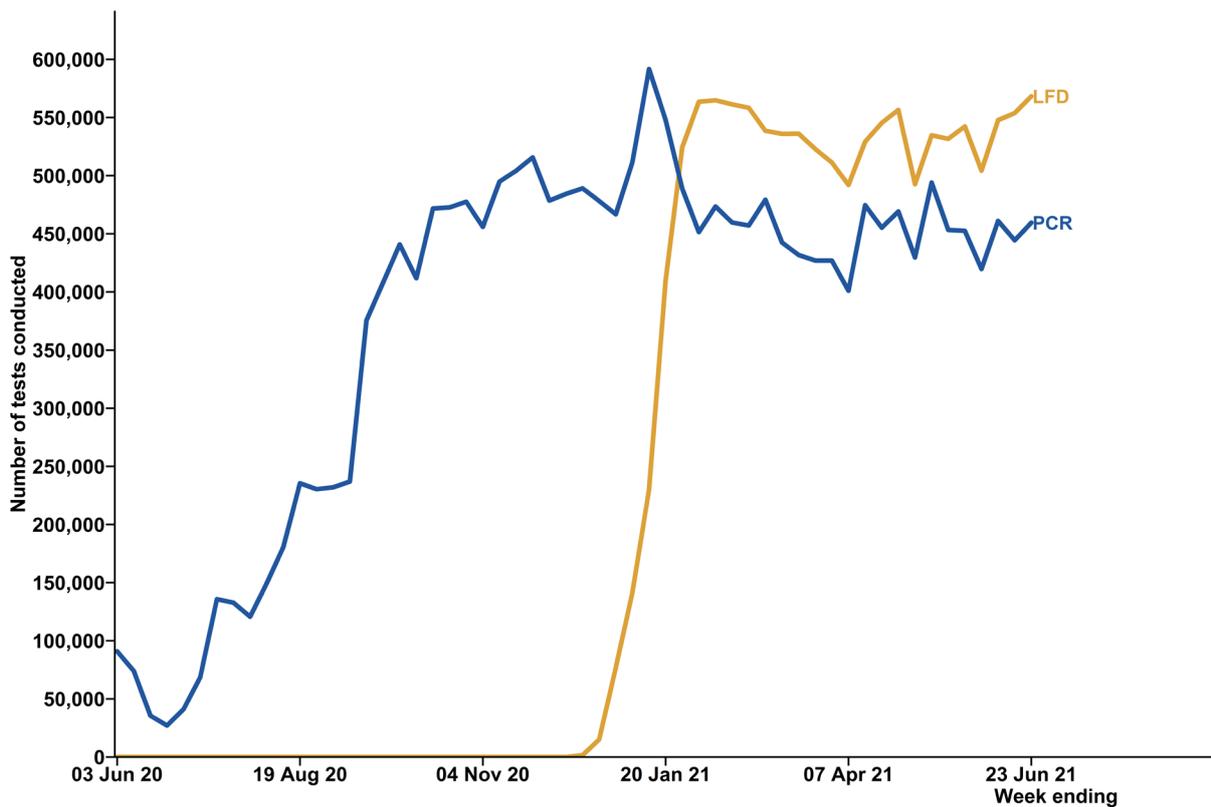
## **PCR and LFD tests conducted and registered to care home settings, England**

Over the last 3 months, the number of PCR tests conducted has remained between 400,000 and 500,000. In the latest week (17 to 23 June), the number of PCRs conducted has increased to 459,560, compared to 444,382 in the previous week (10 to 16 June).

Over the past 3 months the number of LFD tests conducted within care homes has stayed between 490,000 and 570,000. In the latest week, 568,274 LFD tests were conducted and registered to care homes, an increase from 553,863 tests compared to the previous week.

Of the LFD tests conducted in the latest week (17 to 23 June), 460 tests returned a positive result, and 567,687 tests returned a negative result. Since LFD tests were introduced, 25,425 positive results and 12,661,593 negative results have been reported.

**Figure 4: number of LFD and PCR tests conducted in care homes, England**



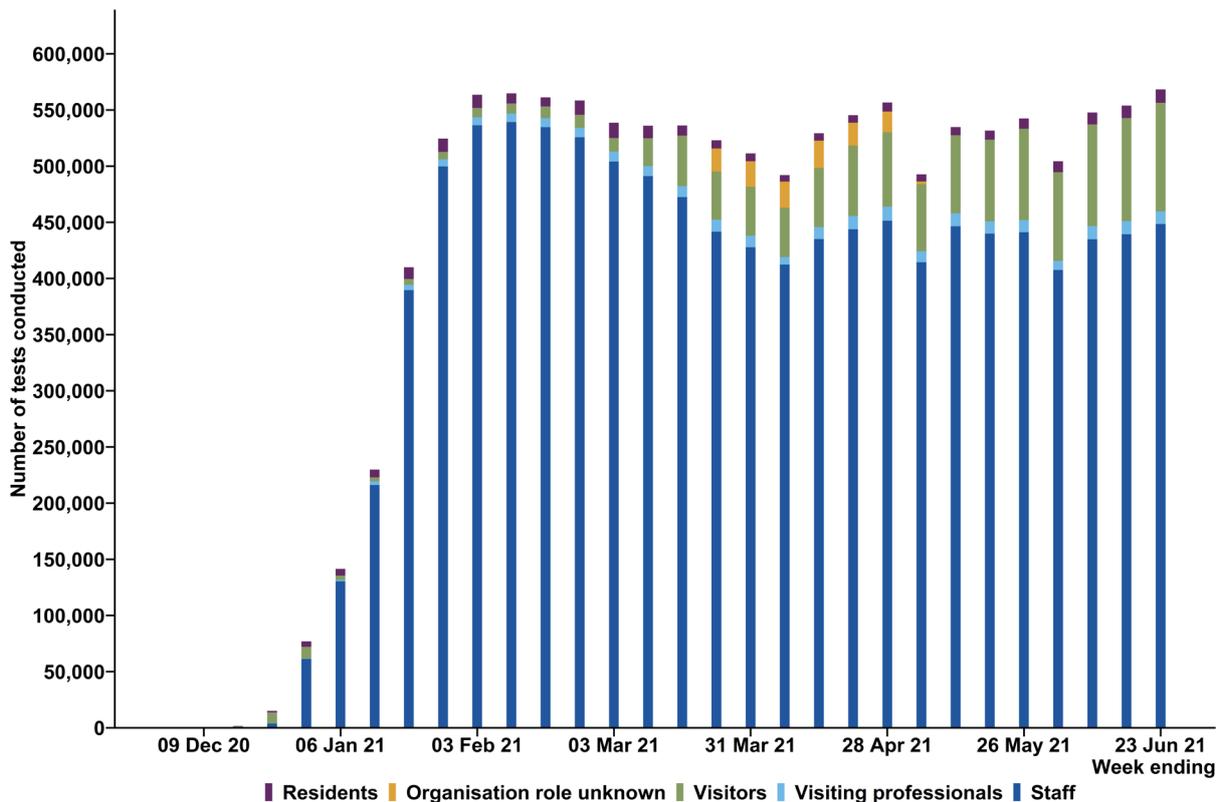
This data can be found in the 'table\_10' and 'table\_11' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021: data tables' document on the [weekly collection page](#).

### **LFD testing in care homes by staff and residents**

The number of LFD tests conducted by staff in care homes has increased to 448,357 tests in the latest week from 439,310 tests in the previous week. Of these, 397 returned a positive result compared to 327 in the previous week.

Between 17 and 23 June, 11,999 LFD tests were conducted by care home residents, an increase from 11,099 in the previous week.

**Figure 5: number of LFD tests reported in care homes by organisation role, England**



This data can be found in the 'table\_11' tab of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021: data tables' document on the [weekly collection page](#).

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

In the latest week, 11,340 LFD tests were taken by visiting professionals in care homes, in comparison with 96,530 tests taken by visitors. The number of tests conducted by visitors increased in the latest week (17 to 23 June).

## 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 PHE) 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.**

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

## 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 peaked at nearly 170,000 at the start of February and has been decreasing overall since then. In the latest week, 103,477 LFD tests were reported by NHS primary care staff which has increased from 100,283 in the previous week. 97 positive test results were returned in the latest week by NHS primary care staff, an increase from 73 positive results in the previous

week. Since LFD testing for primary care staff began, there have been a total of 2,946 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.

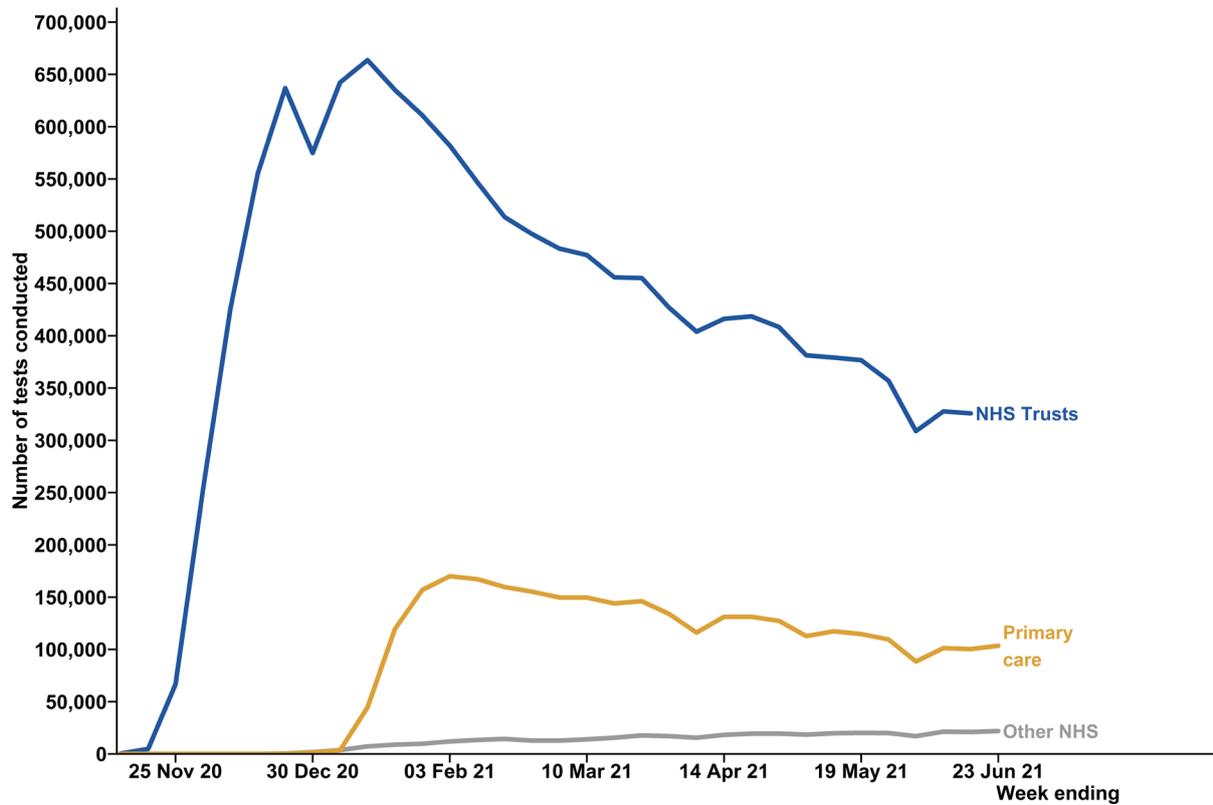
In the latest week (10 to 16 June), the number of LFD tests reported by staff in NHS trusts has decreased to 325,706, from 327,666 tests in the previous week. Of the tests reported during the latest week, 308 tests were positive which is an increase from 246 in the previous week.

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

The majority of 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. In the latest week ending 23 June, 21,846 tests were conducted by other NHS employees which is an increase from 21,014 tests in the previous week and 31 positive test results were received.

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 6: 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\_12', 'table\_13' and 'table\_14' tabs of the 'NHS Test and Trace statistics, 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021: data tables' document on the [weekly collection page](#).

## Tests conducted and registered to private sector workplace settings, England

Asymptomatic testing, using rapid LFD tests, has been rolled out across private 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.

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

|                      | 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) |

## LFD tests conducted and registered to private sector workplace settings, England

The number of LFD tests conducted within private sector workplace settings increased from the start of November when private workplace testing was rolled out. Tests conducted rose steeply to over 100,000 in the week beginning 8 April which coincided with the move to self-report testing on 6 April. The number of LFD tests conducted then increased to peak at 154,762 in the week beginning 13 May. In the latest week (17 to 23 June 2021), 144,309 tests were reported which is a slight decrease from the previous week.

Of the tests conducted in the latest week (17 to 23 June 2021), 271 tests returned a positive result, an increase from 227 in the previous week (10 to 16 June 2021). Since LFD tests were introduced, 3,570 positive results and 2,148,744 negative results have been reported.

The full back series of tests conducted within private sector workplace settings is available in 'table 15' of the 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021 data tables' on the [weekly collection 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 Public Health England. 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 statistics 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, this data should be treated with caution whilst the understanding of the data and its quality improves.

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>6</sup> are in place, it is likely that the number of tests conducted are underreported. 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>6</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 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 more likely to affect negative test results than 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 statistics methodology](#).

## **Future developments**

We continue to explore the feasibility of adding new breakdowns to the publication on rapid testing to support user needs. Over the coming months, we intend to make data available on the following:

- rapid testing in public industries
- community testing programme

For feedback and any further questions, please contact [TestandTrace.Statistics@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:TestandTrace.Statistics@dhsc.gov.uk).