



Who can be tested in England?

A swab test can be applied for via the [online](#) government test service if you are:

- An essential worker with symptoms of the coronavirus
- Aged 65 or over with coronavirus symptoms
- A person who cannot work from home and has coronavirus symptoms
- A person with coronavirus symptoms who lives with an essential worker, someone over 65 or someone who travels to work
- Someone who has a clinical referral from NHS 111 online

Additional testing criteria set up by the government also includes:

- Social care workers and residents in care homes (with or without symptoms) to allow outbreaks to be investigated and as part of a programme to test all care homes
- NHS workers and patients without symptoms, in line with NHS England guidance

The Government have also announced that anyone over the age of 5 years , with symptoms, can now be tested.



Care Home Testing

If a service user has suspected coronavirus symptoms, the care home must contact their local [health protection team](#) if:

- It suspects they has a new coronavirus outbreak
- It has been 28 days or longer since the last case and there are new ones

The health protection team will provide advice and arrange the first tests.

For testing in other situations, the care home can apply for testing kits for service users and staff whether they have symptoms or not. This currently only applies to care homes that look after older service users or service users with dementia.

Consent must be sought from staff and service users prior to the test being carried out, where service users may lack capacity to make a decision about their own testing, the care home must consider if the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 will allow a best interest decision to be made in relation to their testing.

An application for testing can be made by the registered manager [here](#). To apply, you will need:

- Your CQC location ID
- The total number of residents
- The number of residents with coronavirus symptoms
- The total number of staff, including agency staff
- Contact details

The registered manager will receive an email confirming when the tests will arrive and the type of test they will receive. There are two types of tests currently being sent to care homes, these are Randox test kits and Kingfisher test kits. They look similar and both test whether someone has coronavirus in the same way.

The Coronavirus Swab Test

- The test will involve taking a swab of the inside of the nose and the back of the throat, using a long cotton bud swab.
- The test is an 'antigen test' and will test if the person currently has coronavirus.
- Testing kits are not available to purchase and cannot be obtained directly.
- Kits will only be supplied where the person is eligible to receive one. The test to identify if a person has had coronavirus ('antibody test') is not available yet.



Care Worker Assessment Training

Prior to supporting anyone with a swab test, care home staff must complete the online Care Home Swabbing Online Individual Competency Assessment, which can be found [here](#).

Care Home Preparation

Whilst waiting for the testing kits to arrive care home staff can prepare by:

- Familiarising themselves with the testing guidance
- Ensuring that staff have completed the competency assessment training
- Discussing the testing process with service users and staff and where possible, conduct a mock practice test with them

Guidance for each type of test kit has been provided by the Government and can be found [here](#).

Once the testing kits have been received it is important that all testing at the care home is completed within three days of the kits being delivered. A 'timetable for testing in your care home' can be found within the Government guidance documents.

All tests must be completed between 6am and 4pm; a courier will automatically collect completed kits from the care home between 4pm and 9pm the day after the kits have been delivered for three consecutive days. Night staff must be captured during the morning testing.



Unused Test Kits

Any care home test kits not used must be kept for future ad hoc tests if required. Unused test kits must not be returned with the courier. Store test kits in a safe place with an ambient temperature of between 5°C and 22°C.

In this initial phase of testing there is no ability to order further tests for the care home after an initial order to test all residents and staff. Once testing has been provided for all care homes, the offer for further orders for retesting will be looked at for those whose primary client type is older people (over 65 years) and those with dementia.

Test Results

Test kit results can take up to 72 hours to be received back. Where tests have been registered online, results will be emailed across to the registered manager or the individual, where requested. Once received, results must be given to the service user, their GP and family members, where appropriate.

Staff members must keep a record of their own test URN/barcode and await an email of their results.