

Government launches new portal for care homes to arrange coronavirus testing

A [new online portal](#) that makes it easy for care homes to arrange deliveries of coronavirus test kits has been launched today.

As the national testing capacity has increased, the government is prioritising testing for care homes and other areas with the greatest need.

All symptomatic and asymptomatic care home staff and residents in England are now eligible for testing. Testing will be prioritised for care homes that look after the over 65s.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

The additional testing capacity we have achieved delivers many thousands of tests a day for residents and staff in care homes.

This new portal allows those who book tests for staff and residents to do so even more easily, and it also offers a route for the prioritisation of care homes with the greatest need.

We will continue to grow our testing capacity, as we know the certainty and confidence that high quality testing can provide.

Minister of State for Care Helen Whately said:

Care homes are on the frontline in the fight against COVID-19 and we are determined that staff have everything they need to keep themselves and their residents safe. Testing is a crucial part of this. It helps prevent and control outbreaks and means steps can be taken to reduce the spread the virus and protect the most vulnerable.

By prioritising thousands of tests for care home staff and residents, we can target our national testing capacity in the areas and care homes with the greatest need.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is working with local authority Directors of Public Health, Directors of Adult Social Services and local NHS providers to deliver this testing programme for care homes.

Tens of thousands of care home workers and residents have already been tested, either by Public Health England or at drive-through testing sites,

mobile testing units and via satellite testing kits – packages of tests sent to care homes for staff to use on residents.

Testing asymptomatic workers helps prevent and control outbreaks. It means those who test positive can be isolated, reducing the number of people who can spread the virus and protecting the most vulnerable. It also helps to build up a strategic understanding of the prevalence of the virus in local areas and the sector as a whole.

Test results for residents will be communicated to the care home managers. This information will also be provided to councils in order to help manage coronavirus outbreaks in local areas.

- Public Health England's Health Protection Teams have, from the outset, been testing residents when an outbreak is reported at a particular care home. More than 45,000 residents have been tested through this route.
- On 20 April, the government began deliveries of test kits to care homes under the satellite programme. Since then, over 140,000 tests have been delivered to 4,387 care homes.
- On 28 April, the government announced that testing would be expanded in the care sector to include both symptomatic and asymptomatic care home staff and residents.
- The first time a care home suspects an outbreak of coronavirus, care home managers should contact their local health protection team to arrange testing. Subsequent testing will be through this DHSC programme.
- Care worker staff who are self-isolating, either because they or a member of their household has symptoms, should continue to use the [self-referral website](#) to book a home test or an appointment at a test site.
- Domiciliary care staff who need a test should also continue to use the [self-referral website](#) to request a home test or book an appointment at a test site.
- This programme is for England only and supplements the local systems already in place. We are working with the devolved administrations to support their needs around adult social care testing.
- Detailed guidance has been produced for care home managers. A tutorial video is also available to guide staff through the swab collection process:

[Coronavirus test tutorial for care homes with Dr Sarah Jarvis](#)