

Whole home testing rolled out to all care homes in England

- Adult care homes for under-65s, including those with learning disabilities or mental health problems will be offered testing, regardless of whether residents have symptoms
- New social care sector COVID-19 support taskforce set up to continue supporting the care sector and prevent further transmission
- New taskforce to be headed up by newly appointed Chair, David Pearson CBE

The government is extending whole care home testing to all adult care homes after meeting the target of offering a test to every care home for over-65s and those with dementia in England by 6 June.

Since the launch of whole care home testing, the government has provided 1,071,103 test kits to 8,984 care homes, and we are now able to send out over 50,000 test kits a day.

To continue providing support for the sector and to tackle the further spread of the virus in social care the government has set up a new taskforce, with representatives from across government and the care sector.

The new taskforce will help oversee the implementation of the government's social care action plan and care home support package to help end transmission in the community and advise on a plan to support the sector through the next year.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

From today all remaining adult care homes in England will be able to order the whole care home testing service for residents and staff. This service will benefit residents and staff in over 6,000 more care homes.

It will mean that right across the care home sector everyone will have the certainty and confidence of a high quality coronavirus test, whether symptomatic or not, certainty about whether or not they're carrying the virus and confidence that they are doing the right thing both to protect themselves and others.

During the first phase care homes for the over-65s and those caring for people with dementia were prioritised for whole care home testing to target those with the greatest need. The government is now able to offer testing to every adult care home in England, including specialist learning disability and mental health care homes.

Minister 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.

Opening up whole care home testing to the whole social care sector, regardless of symptoms, means we can prevent and control outbreaks and protect the most vulnerable.

Former president of ADASS and Director of Adult Social Care of DHSC, David Pearson has been appointed independent Chair of the Social Care Sector COVID-19 support taskforce which will oversee delivery of infection control measures as set out by the care home support package, backed by £600 million from the government, delivery of testing programmes and effective deployment of the workforce.

David Pearson CBE, Chair of the Social Care Sector COVID-19 Support Taskforce said:

The social care sector is on the frontline of our coronavirus response. This taskforce will support the service by overseeing the delivery of the Social Care Action Plan and the Care Homes Intensive Support Package.

This will play an important part in ensuring we are doing everything we can to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the sector, both for those who rely on care and support and the social care workforce.

David Pearson CBE is the former President of ADASS and the social care COVID-19 lead for the NHS.

It is made up of representatives from PHE, CQC, Care Providers Alliance LGA, ADASS, Healthwatch England, MHCLG, Cabinet Office and DHSC.

Vic Rayner, Executive Director, National Care Forum:

Testing of all those receiving care and the staff delivering it has been recognised as an absolute priority. It is very positive the government is today moving forward with plans to extend the testing across all care homes, and it is vital that we set out a timeline to ensure that everyone who receives care gets access to regular and repeat testing as it is proving to be an absolutely essential tool in the fight against COVID-19.

I welcome the announcement of a Social Care Taskforce that will bring together the multiple strands of work that have been developed to address the impact of COVID-19 on those receiving social care. This taskforce will provide a real opportunity for all partners to work together to ensure a coordinated focus on the core

essential of managing this virus, and bring energy and attention to the way in which Covid is impacting social care now – and critically in planning and preparation for the future.

Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive, Care England:

Care England welcomes the announcement of whole home testing which will help care providers to identify who is COVID-19 positive and we will be able to support people appropriately.

Care home providers are now able to access our [online portal to order tests](#) for their residents or staff regardless of symptoms. In addition, DHSC is contacting all care homes to highlight this service and encourage tests to be ordered.

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 is in addition to the new Test and Trace service which has an important role in limiting the spread of the virus, and thousands of those who have tested positive have already been contacted and their close contacts traced.

- All adult care home providers can access our [online portal](#) to register to receive test kits to carry out whole care home testing
- Approximately 6,250 care homes are now able to access whole care home testing thanks to this extension
- 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.