

Coronavirus National Testing Programme Frequently Asked Questions for Employers of Essential Workers

This document covers the most commonly questions asked by employers who are supporting their employees who have coronavirus-like symptoms. If you have questions that aren't covered in this document or in the accompanying Employer Referral Portal Guide, please email the National Testing Programme Team opshub@dhsc.gov.uk

Currently, this testing offer applies in England and Scotland only. We are working closely with the Devolved Administrations on the approach to testing, and this includes working with them on appropriate solutions for booking into their testing sites. Decisions about eligibility for testing are made by the Devolved Administrations.

1. Can I get staff in my organisation tested?

The National Testing Programme has expanded capacity to test even more essential workers who are self-isolating due to having coronavirus symptoms or because a member of their household has symptoms.

The full list of eligible workers can be found on the [Government website](#). Devolved Administrations operate their own eligibility criteria.

2. Who can get a test?

If you are an employer of eligible essential workers (see list above), then you can offer tests to the following:

- Any self-isolating members of staff who have coronavirus symptoms
- Member of staff does not have symptoms but members of their household do, they can get tested.

3. How do I offer the test to my employees?

A new employer referral portal is now available to make the process as easy as possible. Employers can upload spreadsheets containing the details of essential workers who need to be tested into the secure employer referral portal. The system will generate invitations to the essential workers via SMS and email. Essential workers can then log into the system and book an appointment directly.

A user guide has been issued to all eligible employers giving step by step directions on how to use the system. Employers should email portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk to be given access to the employer referral portal.

The portal also has a self-referral function for employees to self-register, which will take some of the administration burden off employers. Please refer to the accompanying guidance for further information. This system currently operates in England and Scotland only.

4. What kinds of tests are offered?

The test confirms if an individual currently *has* the virus. There are two options for individuals to get tested that will be available via the new website:

- Driving to a regional test site OR
- Employees requesting a home test kit which will be delivered to their home

Where members of the household require testing, **up to three** can attend a regional test site with the essential worker. The total of four, reflects the maximum number of occupants that can be safely tested in a single vehicle.

If the essential worker is registering a test on behalf of a member of their household, that employee does not have to attend the test site with the household member. As long as that symptomatic individual's name has been booked as the person who needs the test, it will be their name on the list at the test site.

The maximum number of home test kits an essential worker can order is five.

5. How many employees can access testing?

Please refer all your employees who are self-isolating because they or their household member(s) have coronavirus symptoms for testing via the employer referral portal.

Please note that regional test centres that operate the drive-through function have a limit of four people per car.

6. If an employee has tested negative, can they come back to work straight away?

Employees with negative results should only return to work if they feel well enough to do so. If everyone with symptoms who was tested in their household receive a negative result, the employee can return to work immediately, providing they are well enough, and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If a household member tests positive, but the worker tests negative, the worker can return to work on day eight from the start of their symptoms if they feel well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If the worker does not have symptoms but a household member tests positive, the worker should continue to self-isolate in line with [national guidance](#).

Employees should discuss their return to work with their employer, following the steps outlined in [Flowchart describing return to work following a SARS-CoV-2 test](#).

If, after returning to work, they later develop symptoms they should follow [national guidance](#) and self-isolate.

7. Will I be told if a member of staff has tested positive for coronavirus?

The programme **does not return the results to an employer**. It is the individual's responsibility to discuss their test result with their employer as part of their return to work conversation.

We will not agree to release data to employers on individual's test results or an individual's engagement with the test programme.

Information on the management of personal data is available in the [Privacy Information](#)

8. Can contractors and part time staff be tested?

Yes. Contractors and part time staff can be tested.

9. I have eligible employees based in Scotland/Wales but they live closer to test sites in England OR my employees travel into England for work. Can they use a test site closer to home/near work/in another nation?

Where essential workers are based in one nation, if they are able to safely access a test site in another then they may do so, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements for that test site. However, we would discourage anyone from travelling an excessive distance to do so, particularly if they are feeling very unwell.

10. How does the self-referral portal work? As an employer of essential workers, can I just direct my staff there instead of uploading their details myself?

Yes you can direct your eligible employees to the [self-referral portal](#)

They can book a test for themselves or for members of their household who have coronavirus symptoms. Employees will be able to book tests at regional test sites or order home test kits.

11. What other support is available for my employees?

There is a Coronavirus Testing Call Centre for employees who have been referred or booked a test themselves, which is contacted on 0300 303 2713. Lines are open daily 08:00 – 20:00. This call centre does not offer medical advice. If your employee is unwell, they should call NHS 111 and in a medical emergency, dial 999.