

# CORONAVIRUS TESTING FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS

INFORMATION PACK FOR EMPLOYERS



HM Government

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# Introduction

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- This guide currently applies to employers in England and Scotland only. Please check [gov.uk/coronavirus\\_and\\_testing](https://gov.uk/coronavirus_and_testing) and follow links to the testing pages to find out what is available in other nations.
- The NHS has set up this system for you and your staff – to make sure that every essential worker who needs a test can get one.
- Now testing will be available to all essential workers – critical to keeping the country moving – and to members of their household if they have symptoms. This includes NHS and Care staff, teachers, hospital cleaners, food production and food retail, transport, utilities, communications, and financial services, public servants and the emergency services as well as other critical infrastructure staff.
- Testing gives people the information they need – whether to continue their isolation in order to protect the vulnerable and the NHS, or if they don't have coronavirus, being able to get back to work, and back to their teams, as soon as they feel well enough.
- Testing is a crucial part of our response to the coronavirus crisis. We appreciate all your help and support in ensuring your employees have fast access to testing.

# How it works

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- For essential workers, booking the test is simple via an online portal and is available for:
  - Employers who can register and refer staff they know are self-isolating and;
  - Employees, if they have symptoms and/or are self-isolating, who can book a test directly for themselves or members of their household
- After you or your employees have entered their details on the portal, individuals will receive a text or email on the same day of registering their details inviting them to book an appointment at one of our drive-through testing sites across the country.
- Results are then sent out to the individual by text, usually within 48hrs.
- You as their employer will not be able to see whether the test has been taken and what the result is.
- A telephone helpdesk is available to help with the process and deal with test result queries.
- To ensure those not able to travel to a test centre can still take the test, find out their results and return to work, there are also an increasing number of alternative testing routes available. The delivery service for home testing kits is being expanded, and whilst there will initially be a limited quantity, access will ramp up quickly in the coming weeks. Home test kits will be delivered by Amazon and sent directly to the home of the essential workers so they, or a symptomatic member of their household, can perform the test. The kit can then be collected by a Royal Mail courier, for onward transportation to one of our laboratories.

# You can help

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- Your support is vital to help reach everyone who has symptoms at the earliest opportunity, allowing people to take the right steps to protect themselves and others, and return to work as soon as it is safe to do so. The new online portal will speed up the process of getting an appointment and take the burden off organisations like yours.
- There are two routes through which your staff can be tested. We need you to:
  1. Use the online employer portal to upload details of those you know are self-isolating OR
  2. Increase awareness of the employee portal amongst your staff so that they can book a test directly for themselves or members of their household if they become symptomatic and are self-isolating
- This information pack is designed to help make it as easy as possible for you and your appropriate colleagues to support both of these crucial roles.

**Employer-led  
referral route**

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# Overview

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- The online portal allows you, the employer, to register and refer self-isolating staff or members of their household.
- If you need further guidance and support, you can contact DHSC at [opshub@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:opshub@dhsc.gov.uk).
- Employees who have been referred for a test can seek assistance from the Coronavirus Testing Helpdesk on 0300 303 2713 for any technical issues related to their booking.
- We have developed a suite of resources to help make it as easy as possible for you to use the portal and brief your staff:
  - A step-by-step guide for using the employer referral portal
  - An infographic to explain what happens when your staff are referred
  - A letter from the Department of Health & Social Care that you can share with your staff
  - A full Frequently Asked Questions documents (with some key FAQs included within this pack)



# The steps to uploading details of self-isolating essential workers

**1**

Log in to the online portal\*

**2**

Download the template

**3**

Populate a list of self-isolating essential workers

**4**

Upload the list of self-isolating essential workers

**5**

**(Optional) Download essential worker test allocation details to see who has booked an appointment**

\*In order to obtain a login, employers of essential workers should email [portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk) with two email addresses that will primarily be used to load frontline worker contact details



# What communications will your staff receive?

- Essential workers who have been invited for a test are notified via **text message** of their invitation to attend and book an appointment at a regional testing centre.
- **A link** is provided for essential workers to register their personal details.
- Once essential workers have registered their details via the website they will be directed to the **appointment booking system** to book a specific slot at the regional testing centre.

What will your text say?

*Visit [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).  
Under 'Testing for  
coronavirus' select 'Book a  
test if you have a verification  
code'. Enter the verification  
code XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-  
XXXX*

# How you can communicate this to your staff

We have developed copy for you to use in staff newsletters and intranet articles to help explain to staff that you as an employer may refer colleagues for testing if they are self isolating

## MAKING IT EASIER TO GET TESTED FOR CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus testing for essential workers or their household member(s) self-isolating with symptoms is vital to help get people back to their important work as soon as it is safe to do so. The NHS has set up this system for us – to make sure that every essential worker who needs a test can get one. This includes YOU.

Now we can refer our essential workers to this type of testing through a new online portal. This means that we can register and refer our staff or members of their household we know to be self-isolating. This will make the process of them getting an appointment quicker and easier. They will then be invited for a test via text message, prompting them to book and attend an appointment at one of our drive-through testing sites across the country.

The tests are entirely optional and we will not have access to your test results, nor will you be expected to share the results with us. If you test negative and feel well enough to return to work, you may choose to do so knowing you're no more likely to spread the virus than anyone else. Only you will know their test results and whether you feel well enough to come back to work.

Testing gives you the information you need – whether to continue your isolation and protect the vulnerable and the NHS, or if you don't have coronavirus, whether you can get back to work, and back to your teams, as soon as you feel well enough.

**Employee-led  
self-referral route**



# Overview

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- Essential workers are able to register and book a test for themselves and/ or their household member(s) if they have coronavirus-like symptoms.
- There are two ways for them to get a test:
  - 1) Book an appointment at a regional testing site
  - 2) Request a home delivery test
- Employees who self-refer for a test can seek assistance from the Coronavirus Testing Helpdesk on 0300 303 2713 for any technical issues related to their booking.
- We have developed a suite of resources to help make it as easy as possible for you brief your staff:
  - A step-by-step guide for using the self-referral portal
  - An infographic to explain what happens when your staff self-refer
  - A full Frequently Asked Questions documents (with some key FAQs included within this pack)
  - Printable, digital and social assets for you to share across your internal communication channels

# The steps that individuals with coronavirus-like symptoms will take on the self referral portal

**1**

Enter the self referral portal and check eligibility

**2**

Confirm who is being tested and choose a testing route

**3**

Registration will occur once a testing route has been selected



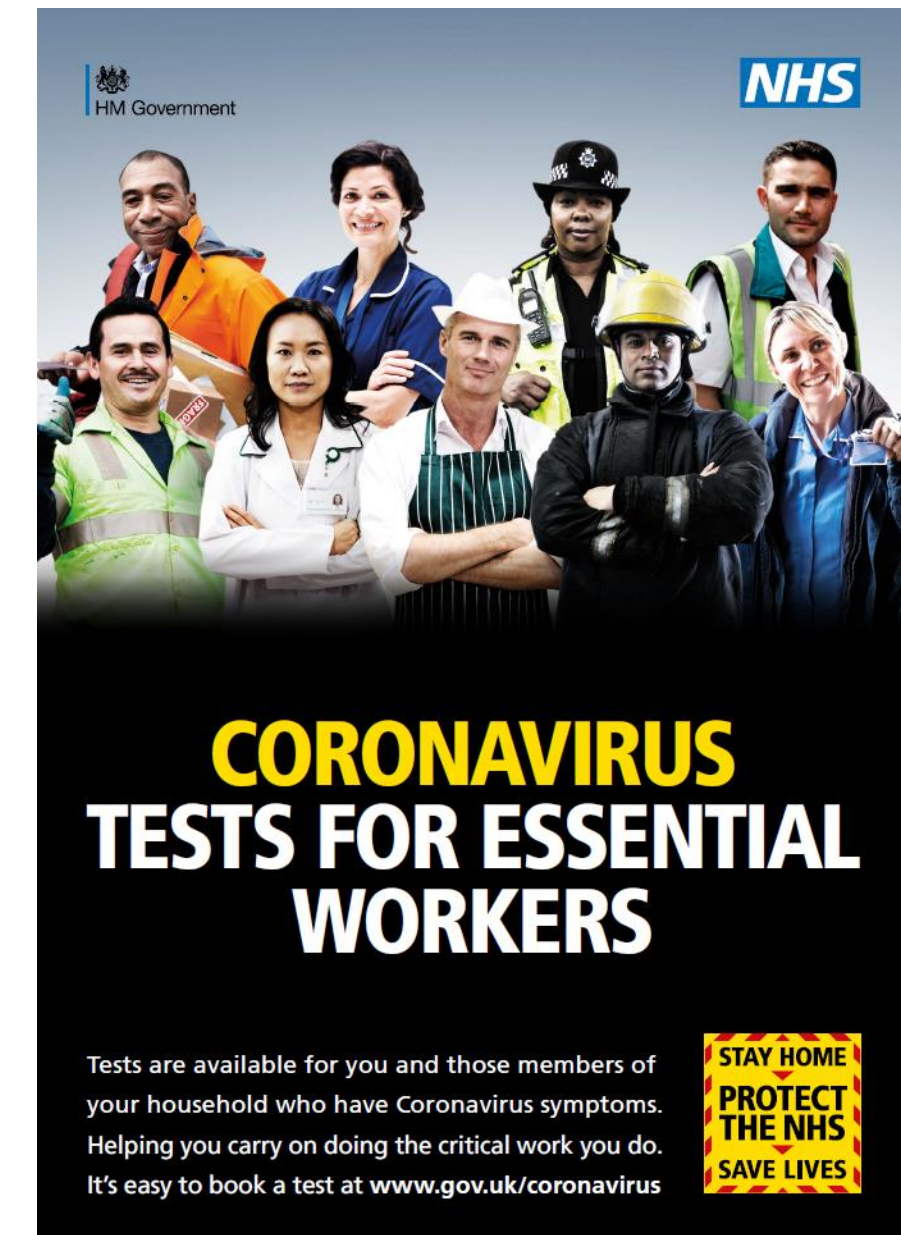
# Resources available to help you communicate about testing

- A4 posters (image-led and easy print versions) - print and display these A4 posters across your sites and work areas, particularly in communal spaces.
- A suite of digital assets to help you promote the message - display the banners on your intranet, use the digital poster on your digital and TV screens, and invite all colleagues to share the email signature.
- Social media is a great way to spread the word and support the campaign. Use the social posts provided for your internal social media channels.

All resources are now available on the link below.

<https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/testing-for-essential-workers/>

Examples of resources



# Digital resources – long copy

We have also developed long and short copy for you to use in staff newsletters and intranet articles to inform eligible staff about how they can book themselves a test for coronavirus if they are self isolating.

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Coronavirus testing for essential workers or their household member(s) self-isolating with symptoms is vital to help get people back to their important work as soon as it is safe to do so. The NHS has set up this system for you – to make sure that every essential worker who needs a test can get one. This includes YOU.

You can now book a test directly for yourself or members of your household if you or they are self-isolating with symptoms of coronavirus. You will then be invited for a test via text message, prompting you to book and attend an appointment at one of our drive-through testing sites across the country. Results are sent out by text usually within 48 hours of your appointment.

There are also an increasing number of alternative testing routes available. The delivery service for home testing kits is being expanded, and whilst there will initially be a limited quantity, access will ramp up quickly in the coming weeks. Home test kits will be delivered by Amazon and sent directly to essential workers' home so they, or a symptomatic member of their household, can perform the test. The kit can then be collected by a Royal Mail courier, for onward transportation to one of our laboratories. This will ensure those not able to travel to a test centre can still take the test, find out their results and return to work.

The tests are entirely optional and we will not have access to your test results, nor will you be expected to share the results with us. If you test negative and feel well enough to return to work, you may choose to do so knowing you're no more likely to spread the virus than anyone else. Only you will know their test results and whether you feel well enough to come back to work.

Testing gives you the information you need – whether to continue your isolation and protect the vulnerable and the NHS, or if you don't have coronavirus, whether you can get back to work, and back to your teams, as soon as possible. If you have symptoms, self-isolate yourself and your household and book your test online at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).



# Digital resources – short copy

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## MAKING IT EASIER TO GET TESTED FOR CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus testing for essential workers or their household self-isolating with symptoms is vital to help get people back to their important work as soon as it is safe to do so. The NHS has set up this system for you – to make sure that every essential worker who needs a test can get one. This includes YOU.

You can now book a test directly at one of our drive-through test centres across the country for yourself or members of their household, if you or they become symptomatic. The delivery service for home testing kits is also currently being expanded, to ensure those not able to travel to a test centre can still take the test, find out their results and return to work. Full information can be found on [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).

Testing gives you the information you need – whether to continue isolation and protect the vulnerable and the NHS, or if you don't have coronavirus, whether you can get back to work, and back to your teams, as soon as you feel well enough. If you have symptoms, self-isolate yourself and your household and book your test online at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Eligibility for testing

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- Q: Who can get a test?
- A: Tests are offered 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.

You should get tested in the first three days of coronavirus symptoms appearing, although testing is considered effective up until day five. No testing should be undertaken after day five, unless it's for a specific reason which will be agreed on a case by case basis by local microbiologists.

# Access

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- Q: Is there a mobile version of the portal?
- A: No, at the moment there is just a URL link which opens up the portal in a web browser. This will be the same for mobile, tablet or laptop/PC.
  
- Q: What are the system requirements to access the portal?
- A: The URL link for the portal is compatible with web browsers on all major operating systems across mobile, tablet, laptop/PC.
  
- Q: I am using Internet Explorer and have problems accessing the portal?
- A: For the best functionality you need to use Google Chrome. There are known issues with older versions of Internet Explorer.

# Essential worker journey

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- Q: Do I have to tell staff I have uploaded to the website they have been allocated a slot?
- A: No. Provided the essential worker's mobile number is accurate, and provided in an acceptable format, we will contact the essential worker for them to attend the regional test centre.
  
- Q: Can I see how many of my staff have been tested?
- A: You will be able to see who has been allocated an appointment. You will not be able to see whether the test has been taken and what the result is.
  
- Q: Where can my staff go if they have referred themselves for a test?
- A: Employees who have been referred for a test can seek assistance from the Coronavirus Testing Helpdesk on 0300 303 2713 for any technical issues related to their booking.

# Essential worker test results

- Q: If an employee has tested negative, can they come back to work straight away?
- A: 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.

- Q: Will I be told if a member of staff has tested positive for coronavirus?
- A: 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 here [Privacy Information](#)

**Thank you.**



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