

Interim Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth Emergency Frontline Health and Social Care Worker Testing Pathway (temporary)

We are aware that due to increased demand on the national Pillar 2 testing capacity, COVID-19 testing for Health and Social Care Workers (HSCWs) has not always been accessible for many of our workforce or their families, as quickly as we would like.

This is a nationally recognised issue and priority, and it is anticipated that additional capacity will be created in the coming weeks to support Pillar 2 testing.

In the meantime, in order to ensure that we support our frontline HSCWs in Southampton, Hampshire and Portsmouth - who are so critical to the delivery of care - to access testing quickly, we are standing up a temporary testing pathway.

Who can access this testing pathway?

This pathway will be open to the following frontline HSCWs and any symptomatic household members, including children, in the event that they are unable to access Pillar 2 testing:

- Primary Care
- Care Home workers
- Home (Domiciliary) Care workers
- Community Pharmacists
- Other service/safety critical roles e.g. Approved Mental Health Professionals / Emergency Social Workers

If any HSCW, or a member of their immediate household, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 requiring the whole household to isolate [and have not been able to order either a drive/walk through test or postal test](#), they can be referred for consideration of screening through the Community Testing Service.

How can HSCW's access this testing pathway?

The HSCW's manager should contact the HIOW Infection Prevention Service (7 days a week, 09.00-16.00) on

hiow.c19ipc@nhs.net or **08703156601** (please use telephone contact on weekends)

to refer the HSCW. The request will be triaged based on the impact of the absence of the HSCW on their service and the likelihood that early testing will support them to return to frontline work.

What happens if the HSCW is accepted for testing?

The details of the HSCW and any household member(s) will be collected and forwarded to the Community Testing Service (CTS). The CTS will send a courier to the HSCW's home address with COVID-19 swabs. This will usually occur within 24 hours of referral and the courier will call 30 minutes ahead of delivery. The HSCW will be requested to perform a nose and throat swab on themselves and symptomatic household members, and hand these back to the courier, who will then deliver them to the local NHS laboratory for testing.

Please note that this is not a clinical testing service and all clients will be expected to self-swab.

When will the test result(s) be available?

Depending on laboratory capacity results will be available within 24-48 hours.

How will a HSCW get the test result(s)?

HSCW's will be emailed the results if an email address has been provided. If they have not been contacted after 48 hours they are requested to contact the HIOW IPC Service and results will be given to them. HSCW's are then expected to relay these results to their employer.

FAQs

Who is eligible to use this Frontline Health and Social Care Worker Testing Pathway?

Frontline Health and Social Care Workers may be able to access this service if they work in:

- Primary Care
- Care Home workers
- Home (Domiciliary) Care workers
- Community Pharmacists
- Other service/safety critical roles e.g. Approved Mental Health Professionals / Emergency Social Workers

AND

- are frontline staff,
- who cannot work from home when isolating, and;
- have been unable to access Pillar 2 testing services.

What areas does this pathway cover?

This pathway covers Southampton, Hampshire and Portsmouth. It does not include the Isle of Wight or other areas outside of Southampton, Hampshire and Portsmouth.

Do I need to try to access Pillar 2 testing before contacting your service?

Yes – there is limited capacity in the NHS Pillar 1 laboratories which we need to prioritise for those who most need screening. Please try to access Pillar 2 testing and accept postal tests if available or attend local testing sites? as a first option.

If I need to use your service, will I need to travel?

No, the service will go to the person's home to provide swabbing and drop to the nearest lab so no travel is required for staff.

Will the service swab me or do I need to swab myself and household?

It is a self-swab service so you will need to swab yourself (if symptomatic) and any household members, as you would need to do with a postal swab.

Can I work if I have a negative screen but a member of my household returns a positive COVID swab?

No – if you have a confirmed case in your household you will need to isolate as per the national requirements. A negative swab will not enable you to return to a public place of work but you could work from home if well.

Will administration and clerical staff be included in this pathway?

If they are critical to business continuity and cannot work from home, they may be included, depending on Pillar 1 capacity. The expectation is that many admin/clerical staff would be supported to perform their duties remotely.

What information will managers need to have to request testing?

Managers will need to have the following information from HSCW's and households:

- Number of symptomatic HSCW's / households and the impact on service provision
- Details of each symptomatic person who requires testing, including:
 - forename, surname
 - date of birth
 - NHS number
 - swabbing address
 - email contact.

Infection prevention and control

Please ensure all staff are adhering to the hygiene and PPE guidance and that Infection Prevention and Control policies are both up to date and actively communicated to all your staff. Please also encourage all staff to take up their offer of a flu vaccination.

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