

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – Regular testing process

Note all information is on the PHA website and will be updated in the dedicated section for whole home regular testing.

REGULAR WHOLE HOME TESTING

FAQ: Is my home expected to complete regular whole home testing?

The regular programme of care home testing **does not** extend to the testing of individuals residing in, and staff working in, supported living facilities.

Care Homes which provide care to permanent residents, and also a respite care service, should arrange to test **all residents (permanent and temporary)** at the point the monthly testing programme is undertaken in that particular care home. The date of the care home testing may mean that some residents who are tested 48 hours prior to entering a care home (whether it is a temporary or permanent arrangement) will be subject to a further test soon after their previous test.

Care Homes which **only** provide respite care (i.e. short breaks including overnight stays, not day care) should also be included in the regular programme of testing; these homes will be registered with the RQIA as a residential or nursing care home. Testing will be important in this setting due to the frequent movement of people in and out of the facility, given the nature of respite care. These homes should also have monthly testing for residents **who are there at the time of testing.**

CARE HOME SUPPORT

FAQ: Will my home get any support to complete regular testing?

Staff training is underway through PHA and CEC and is available to all homes.

HSC Trusts will continue to provide assistance with swabbing residents in the immediate future in homes that need support.

PHA/HSCB are seeking support for some initial funding for care homes. The position on this will be confirmed shortly.

ORDERING TEST KITS

FAQ: How and when do I order my kits?

You book your whole home test kits once per month via a booking portal - <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>

On the portal you are asked to input your unique organisation number, total number of staff, total number of residents and a calculation is made for one month's order (i.e. one set for all residents and two sets for staff)

This will include a few extra kits in case any are damaged in use.

FAQ: Do test kits need to be assembled / packed on return?

Test kits don't come assembled which mean you have to assemble them as you use them. Kits will need packaged up in individual boxes for return to ensure a safe sample delivery.

DHSC plan to change packaging to make this process quicker as a result of care home research gathered in England.

FAQ: What do I do with unused kits?

You can keep unopened kits in the home for future use by storing them safely at room temperature. Only use these when conducting whole home asymptomatic testing. Do not use these kits when testing is called for following a positive result, suspected outbreak management or for symptomatic testing.

FAQ: What do I do if I have problems with my courier collection?

If a courier arrives early before 4pm planned time and you are not ready please ask them to wait until 4pm.

The courier will collect your tests between 1600-2200. If they do not arrive on time, ring Freephone number: 119

Your kits will be safe for 48 hours, with correct storage management, and may be collected the following morning.

For further information see full courier FAQ:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2020-07/COURIER%20COLLECTION%20FAQ%20%282%29.pdf>

GETTING TEST RESULTS

FAQ: How do I register for test results?

It crucial that you register each completed test on line at the following website <https://www.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/care-home>

An excel spreadsheet template is provided for documenting swabs taken as you complete testing. This information can then be uploaded to the website when testing is completed daily.

FAQ: Registering test kits is very time consuming – can this be addressed?

DSHC have launched a bulk registration portal that allows fifty test swab kit details for staff or residents to be uploaded on one spreadsheet.

FAQ: Who receives the test result?

When registering residents' swabs the care home manager will provide the home email address and mobile number. The Home Manager will receive residents' test results.

Staff will receive their own result by logging their personal email address and mobile number.

Positive test results will be managed through PHA contact tracing team and shared with PHA duty room as required.

See privacy notice for more information:

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2020-07/PHA%20Contact%20Tracing%20Centre%20-%20Privacy%20Notice%20v2%2022%207%2020_0.pdf

FAQ: How long does it take for test results to be confirmed?

National testing programme aims to have test results back within 72 hours.

If no result is received after 72 hours staff should check spam email addresses. A missing result can be escalated for investigation by phoning 119.

FAQ: What should we do if a result for a staff member or resident comes back unclear?

You should repeat the test, using spare kits in the home and order a collection via courier in the usual manner.