

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Testing Programme: Privacy Information for Users of the Pillar 2 Testing Service

Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing in Northern Ireland is part of the UK COVID-19 Testing Programme, commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in England. COVID-19 testing is carried out in Northern Ireland in partnership with Health and Social Care Northern Ireland, including the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Department of Health.

The COVID-19 Testing Programme is divided into a number of separate workstreams called 'pillars'. The Pillar 2 Testing Programme provides swab testing for the wider population.

This Privacy Notice provides a broad description of the way the PHA processes your personal information under the COVID-19 Pillar 2 Testing Programme, when you choose to have a COVID-19 test. It also summarises how DHSC, as commissioner of the Testing Programme, uses your personal information.

COVID-19 Testing Programme: Pillar 2

The first step of taking a test for COVID-19 usually involves taking a swab of the nose and the back of the throat, which can be done by the person themselves (self-administered) or by someone else (assisted).

The test will confirm whether you currently have COVID-19. This is so that you can:

- take the right steps to look after yourself
- protect others
- know if you are fit and well to return to your place of work or study
- potentially reduce the amount of time you have to self-isolate for

The different ways you can get tested under pillar 2 are covered below:

Regional or local test sites

You may register for an appointment at a local drive-through or walk-through test site.

Home tests

You may register for a home test. There are a number of home test kit suppliers and their processes may vary slightly depending on which test kit you receive.

Satellite service

A satellite service (web based ordering and delivery service for organisations) currently serves a number of types of accommodation facilities, including care homes, supported living and prison environments. Please see Annex A for more information on the satellite service, including care home testing.

For detailed information on coronavirus testing, including who is eligible for a test and how to get tested, please see the [Testing and Tracing for COVID-19](#) section of the PHA website. Information on new and emerging testing technologies is included at Annex B.

Health and Social Care Northern Ireland takes your privacy seriously and we only collect the information we need to. Staff will only access your information on a 'strict need to know' basis when they are involved in supporting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Information that may be included for you or those that require testing:

- first and last name
- date of birth
- address including postcode
- gender
- ethnicity
- landline and mobile phone number
- home and delivery address, including postcode
- email address
- National Insurance Number
- vehicle registration number (if you are taking a test at a regional test site)
- Health and Care Number (so that we can make sure your test result gets stored in your Electronic Care Record)
- details and date of onset of symptoms
- vaccination status
- employer details
- recent travel history (for example, whether you travelled overseas in the last 14 days and the country you spent most time in)
- other household members' details, if you are ordering or booking a test for them as well
- your NHS login account identifier (if you access our services using your NHS login details)

- whether you tested positive more than 90 days ago

Once you have taken the test, the laboratory will analyse the sample and provide your test result to the National Pathology Exchange (NPEX). The laboratory does not receive any of your personal data, only the specimen ID from the test kit and the laboratory attaches the result to the specimen ID.

NPEX will send your test result to the Business Services Organisation in Northern Ireland which maintains a central database, along with other information relating to COVID-19, to enable health and social care organisations to respond to COVID-19. The Business Services Organisation [shares this information with the PHA](#). You will be informed of your result by text and/or email. Your result will also be sent to your Electronic Care Record.

If you test positive

If you test positive for COVID-19, you must self-isolate to stop the virus from spreading. Your data will be sent to the Contact Tracing Service who will follow up with you. For further information please see: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19/contact-tracing>.

You must inform your employer if you test positive for COVID-19, because they will need to take action to support you and manage any impact on the organisation (such as inviting others you work closely with to be tested).

Coronavirus is classified as a biological agent as defined in regulation 2(1) of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

Data controllers

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has commissioned the COVID-19 Testing Programme on behalf of the UK and is a data controller for the purposes of Data Protection Legislation. DHSC decides what information is required and how it needs to be used. Further information on how the DHSC uses your information is available on the following website - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing: privacy information](#).

The DHSC is data controller for the following purposes:

- confirming the appointment to the regional or local test site or mobile test unit (if that is where you are having your test)
- performing a security and ID verification (QR code check) at the local test site
- receiving and processing your test
- returning your results to you
- sharing your results with NI health bodies to inform local planning and responses to COVID-19
- sharing data with Business Services Organisation ITS to link your test result to your Electronic Care Record and to analyse data in relation to COVID-19
- undertaking quality assurance of the testing process, for example clinical process assurance
- analysis to support operational decisions to improve the full end-to-end testing process, such as:
 - day-to-day use, for example whether someone attended their appointment
 - to inform regional test sites of improvements to the testing process, for example to manage capacity or throughput
 - support end-to-end logistics planning

When your results are returned to Northern Ireland, the Public Health Agency assumes responsibility as data controller.

The PHA is data controller for the following purposes:

- **surveillance** - to identify trends in the COVID-19 disease outbreak and to prevent/control spread
- **contact tracing** – to enable us to contact you to provide advice if appropriate and to seek information on others that you have been in contact with, so that they can be alerted and take the necessary steps to prevent further transmission. Please see [PHA Privacy Notice – COVID-19 Contact Tracing Programme for more information](#)
- **analysis** – for health research, health protection, service improvement and health promotion and for reports and the production of official statistics

Please see Annex C for a full list of data controllers.

Data processors and other recipients of your data

Other organisations involved in processing your data will be doing so either with an agreement in place with DHSC to provide that service, or with a legal basis of their own (such as NHS Digital).

An example of this is the Business Services Organisation, who will process your information when it is returned to Northern Ireland and will share it with the PHA (under an agreement the PHA has with Business Services Organisation). Information is also shared with the Department of Health in Northern Ireland for the purposes of COVID-19 monitoring.

Please see Annex D for a full list of data processors.

Where testing is carried out on an organisational basis, for example via your place of work, written consent to share results of your test with the organisation requesting the test will be sought in advance. This is to allow your organisation to take action to support you and manage any impact on the organisation. This applies to staff and also to care partners who may share results directly with the organisation.

Legal basis under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018

PHA's legal basis for processing your personal data is:

- UK GDPR Article 6(1)(e) – the processing is necessary for the performance of its official tasks carried out in the public interest in providing and managing a health service
- UK GDPR Article 9(2)(h) – the processing is necessary for medical diagnosis, the provision of health treatment and management of a health and social care system
- UK GDPR Article 9(2)(i) – the processing is necessary for reasons of public interest in the area of public health
- Data Protection Act 2018 – Schedule 1, Part 1, (2) (2) (f) – Health or social care purposes

Your rights as a data subject

By law, you have a number of rights as a data subject and this Testing Programme does not take away or reduce these rights.

These rights are:

- your right to get copies of your information – you have the right to ask for a copy of any information about you that is used

- your right to get your information corrected – you have the right to ask for any information held about you that you think is inaccurate to be corrected
- your right to limit how your information is used – you have the right to ask for any of the information held about you to be restricted, for example, if you think inaccurate information is being used
- your right to object to your information being used – you can ask for any information held about you to not be used. However, this is not an absolute right and we may need to continue using your information. We will tell you if this is the case.

Do I need to give my consent?

The data is obtained on a lawful basis as outlined above and therefore you do not need to give consent.

Tests are completely voluntary; you do not have to take a test, but are encouraged to do so.

Where do you get my personal data from?

Much of the personal data we use will be obtained directly from you. You will provide this when you are booking a test (or someone is booking on your behalf) and when you are registering on the results website site (or someone is registering for your test result on your behalf).

How long do you keep my personal data?

In accordance with Data Protection legislation, we will only retain your data for as long as necessary and in line with Department of Health guidance.

How do I complain if I am not happy?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of this privacy notice, or with how your personal information is being processed, please contact the Data Protection Officer at the following address:-

Data Protection Officer:

Ms Rosemary Taylor

Public Health Agency, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS

Tel: 028 9536 3519

Email: dpo.pha@hscni.net

If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

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Changes to this Privacy Notice

This Privacy Notice will be kept under review and any updates will be placed on our website.

Revised 25 May 2021

Annex A: Organisational Testing in Satellite Service

Testing has been rolled out to care homes and other similar residences, such as residential homes, hospices, and for staff only in supported living settings and prisons.

If you're a resident in a care home you will be tested where you live. The manager of the setting will register on GOV.UK via a unique care home portal for the number of home test kits they need for their residents and staff, then register each person individually (so the test kit number can be linked to your details). The staff of the home will administer the tests and they will be collected by courier from the home and sent for analysis.

Once the test has been taken, your sample will be sent off for analysis, and the result will be sent back to you and/or the manager. This is because the manager will need to take action if you test positive, such as moving you to a different part of the home to reduce the risk of spreading the infection to other residents or staff.

If someone has been legally appointed to manage your affairs (such as someone with Power of Attorney status for you) they will also be informed of the result (although this does not apply for Power of Attorneys who have been appointed to manage your financial affairs only).

Care partners

A care partner is described as "someone who has a defined practical role to provide additional support to your relative in the care home." A care partner is normally a close family member or friend who has a long-standing relationship with a resident and plays an essential role on a regular basis on maintaining a resident's health and wellbeing. Care partners support their relatives with an identified need such as encouraging them to eat and drink. In essence, a care partner is a specific type of visitor to a care home setting who wishes to visit and provide care for a resident.

Arrangements are in place with care homes to facilitate weekly PCR testing of care partners in line with the care homes regular Testing Programme.

The information contained in this Privacy Notice applies to care home testing.

Annex B: The National COVID-19 Testing Partnership includes new testing technologies which may be relevant to the public / workplaces

Lateral flow testing

Lateral flow testing may be used in either symptomatic or asymptomatic populations who are at risk of COVID-19 infection. It is used to ease service demand on laboratories and to produce results rapidly (within 15 to 20 minutes), for timely reporting and for early detection, isolation and contact tracing of data subjects who might be infected by COVID-19.

You may be given a rapid test kit by your workplace, university or school. This list may grow as the COVID-19 Testing Programme continues to expand.

Note: this testing will have a separate Privacy Notice.

Loop Mediated Isothermal Amplification (LAMP) testing

The majority of tests to detect the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, use nose and throat swabs.

Queens University Belfast are supporting rapid saliva test for COVID-19 in asymptomatic health care workers and some schools.

Note: this testing will have a separate Privacy Notice.

Antibody testing for coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Pillar 3 Testing Programme provides serology testing to show if people have antibodies from having had COVID-19.

An antibody test can tell you if it's likely you've had COVID-19 before. It does not work for everyone, as some people who've had the virus do not have antibodies. An antibody test does not tell you:

- if you're immune to COVID-19
- if you can or cannot spread the virus to other people

There is currently one type of antibody test available - the ELISA Test.

Note: this testing will have a separate Privacy Notice.

Annex C: List of data controllers

Data controllers for the testing programme are:

- DHSC has commissioned the COVID-19 testing programme on behalf of the UK and will be data controller for the purposes of Data Protection legislation.
- NHS Digital is the controller for any personal information you provided to NHS Digital to get an NHS login account and verify your identity, and uses that personal information solely for that single purpose. For this personal information, DHSC's role is a "processor" only and must act under the instructions provided by NHS Digital (as the "controller") when verifying your identity.
- Public Health Agency – for:
 - **surveillance** - to identify trends in the COVID-19 disease outbreak and to prevent/control spread
 - **contact tracing** – to enable us to contact you to provide advice if appropriate and to seek information on others that you have been in contact with, so that they can be alerted and take the necessary steps to prevent further transmission. Please see [PHA Privacy Notice – COVID-19 Contact Tracing Programme for more information](#)
 - **analysis** – for health research, health protection, service improvement and health promotion and for reports and the production of official statistics

Annex D: List of data processors

Each organisation that processes your information must provide you with information about how they do this, and this information will be limited to their role in the test programme. This should be publicly available on their website or can be requested from them. For example, if you want to know more about how NHS Digital uses your information, then you can visit their website.

Data processors can only act upon written instruction from a data controller; they cannot use data and information without permission of the data controller.

Name	Services they provide
ACF Technologies	Providing software to enable you to book a test at a regional test site
Amazon	Provide logistics for home delivery of test kits, collecting completed test kits from homes and delivering them to labs
Amazon Web Services	Provide digital solution for ordering home test kits
Barcode Warehouse	Providing bar codes for test kits
The Business Services Organisation	Processing test results on behalf of PHA. Uploading results data to the NI Electronic Care Record
Courier 1 (DHL)	Distribution, storage, packing and transport of test kits
Courier 2 (Royal Mail Group)	Collecting completed test kits from homes and delivering them to labs
Courier 3 (Kuenhe + Nagel)	Distribution, storage, packing and transport of test kits
Deloitte	Sends test invitation text messages to referred employees, hosts and maintains the digital platform that the test tracking system sits on, manages the registration and appointment booking, provides the capability for users to enter sample bar codes, responsible for

Name	Services they provide
	holding data captured by the registration system and making it available to the NHS
Experience Lab	Provide user or market research for people who have undertaken tests
G4S	Provide facilities management for some regional test sites
Levy	Provide facilities management for some regional test sites
National Pathology Exchange (NPEX) – hosted by Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust	Receives results from labs and links results to test registration, flows results data to NHS Business Services Authority, flows results data to NI Business Services Organisation.
NHS Digital	Manages the 'Ask for a coronavirus test' section of the NHS.UK website (for members of the public booking tests)
Office of National Statistics (ONS)	Research and analytics for monitoring of COVID-19
Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland)	Analysis of results data for monitoring of COVID-19
Randox	Analyses the test samples in NI
Serco	Provides facilities management for all test sites
Royal Mail	Provide logistics for home delivery of test kits, collecting completed test kits from homes and delivering them to labs
Teleperformance	Providing call centre assistance
TransUnion	Provides identity verification checks as part of the registration process for a home test kit (this is not a credit check and will not affect your credit score)