

We are pleased to share our care home testing update for care home managers.

This regular update will keep you informed of important announcements and updated guidance from the National Care Home Testing Programme

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## Programme progress

### Regular retesting announced for care homes in England

- On Friday we announced our testing strategy for Adult Social Care, which included our programme for regular retesting for care homes in England. Read our announcement at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regular-retesting-rolled-out-for-care-home-staff-and-residents>
- Government policy is that regular testing should be taking place in care homes. All residents should be tested every 28 days and all staff members (including volunteers, visiting professionals and agency staff) should be tested every week
- This policy has been informed by scientific advice from SAGE and PHE. It is crucial to protect residents and staff and is an important part of the national effort to tackle coronavirus (Covid-19)
- Regular retesting is critical, even where residents and staff have no symptoms. Whole care home repeat testing is about identifying and isolating all cases of the virus before it can spread further and become an outbreak
- Retesting is initially available to homes who primarily care for those over 65 and those with dementia, before being rolled out to

all other adult care homes in August. These homes can register for retesting now at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>

- When you register you will receive enough kits for a 28-day testing cycle (to test all residents once and all staff every week for four weeks) with each order
- As with the first round of whole home testing, care homes can test over multiple days and must book couriers for each day of testing at <https://www.carehomecollect.co.uk>
- Our latest guidance packs for retesting can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#care-home>

## **Outbreak management and rapid testing announced for care homes with outbreaks**

- As part of the launch of the Adult Social Care strategy, we have also announced a new outbreak management process for care homes, which includes rapid testing when a case is identified. This will be rolled out from 13 July
- When a case of COVID-19 is identified you should notify your Health Protection Team (HPT) immediately and follow the agreed process for notifiable diseases as outlined at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/notifiable-diseases-and-causative-organisms-how-to-report>
- A COVID-19 case could be identified either through a lab-confirmed case or in certain circumstances when a resident's GP and Health Protection Team (HPT) agree following a clinically suspected case
- Your HPT will undertake a public health risk assessment to determine next steps
- If an outbreak is suspected, the HPT will then organise rapid testing of your whole care home (residents and staff) and retesting

on days 4-7 of all staff and residents who initially tested negative to reduce the false-negative risk

- Retesting from 28 days after the last suspected case will be provided through Pillar 2 (DHSC) to confirm the outbreak has ended
- If a new case or cases are detected after this 28 days recovery period has been achieved, then this is a new outbreak and the care home should notify the HPT for assessment

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## **Key Updates**

### **Switching test kit types to speed up our results process**

- We have set up new labs across the UK to speed up the time that it takes for your tests to reach a lab and for you to receive your results
- As part of this effort to speed up results, when applying for retesting, you may receive a different type of test kit to the ones you received during your initial round of testing
- There are two different test kit types, Randox and non-Randox (also known as Kingfisher)
- It is really important that different test kit types do not get mixed up, as your local lab may not be able to process the test kits you received for your initial round of testing
- If we send you a different test kit type for retesting, then please place your old, unused test kits in a box, label the box as 'old test kits' and do not use them
- If your care home is affected by this change in test kits, one of our team will reach out to you once we have processed your retesting order

## **Remember to register all test kits individually, or you will not get a result**

- Please continue to register all test kits individually after completing swabbing. If you don't register each test kits, you will not receive a result
- As part of our work to continually improve the National Testing Programme, we now have one website to register both Radox and non-Radox test kits. The link to register all test kits is: <https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/care-home>
- You will receive test results via email and text message. Please ensure that you manage consent within your care home for receiving results

## **Guidance for the management of your staff and residents**

- We have published guidance on the management of staff and residents who have been exposed to COVID-19, including helpful flow charts detailing the return to work process for symptomatic and asymptomatic staff
- You can access this guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>

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## **Join our care home testing webinar**

We are running our webinars throughout July. Please join us to learn more about retesting, the care home testing process and take part in the Q&A.

Link to register for the webinar:

<https://event.on24.com/wcc/r/2375949/724EF6345473A192F6B9C19334699A29/1077953>

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## **Thank you for all the work you are doing**

We know how hard you are working to keep your staff and residents safe. Since we started the testing programme, hundreds of thousands of tests have been completed, thanks to your effort and commitment.