

Swab Testing Summary

Last update 27.07.20



Who can be tested in England?

A swab test can be applied for via the [online](#) government test service if you are:

- **An essential worker with symptoms of the coronavirus**
- **You live with an essential worker**
- **Are a child under 5 years old who has symptoms of coronavirus and lives with an essential worker**

Additional testing criteria set up by the government also includes:

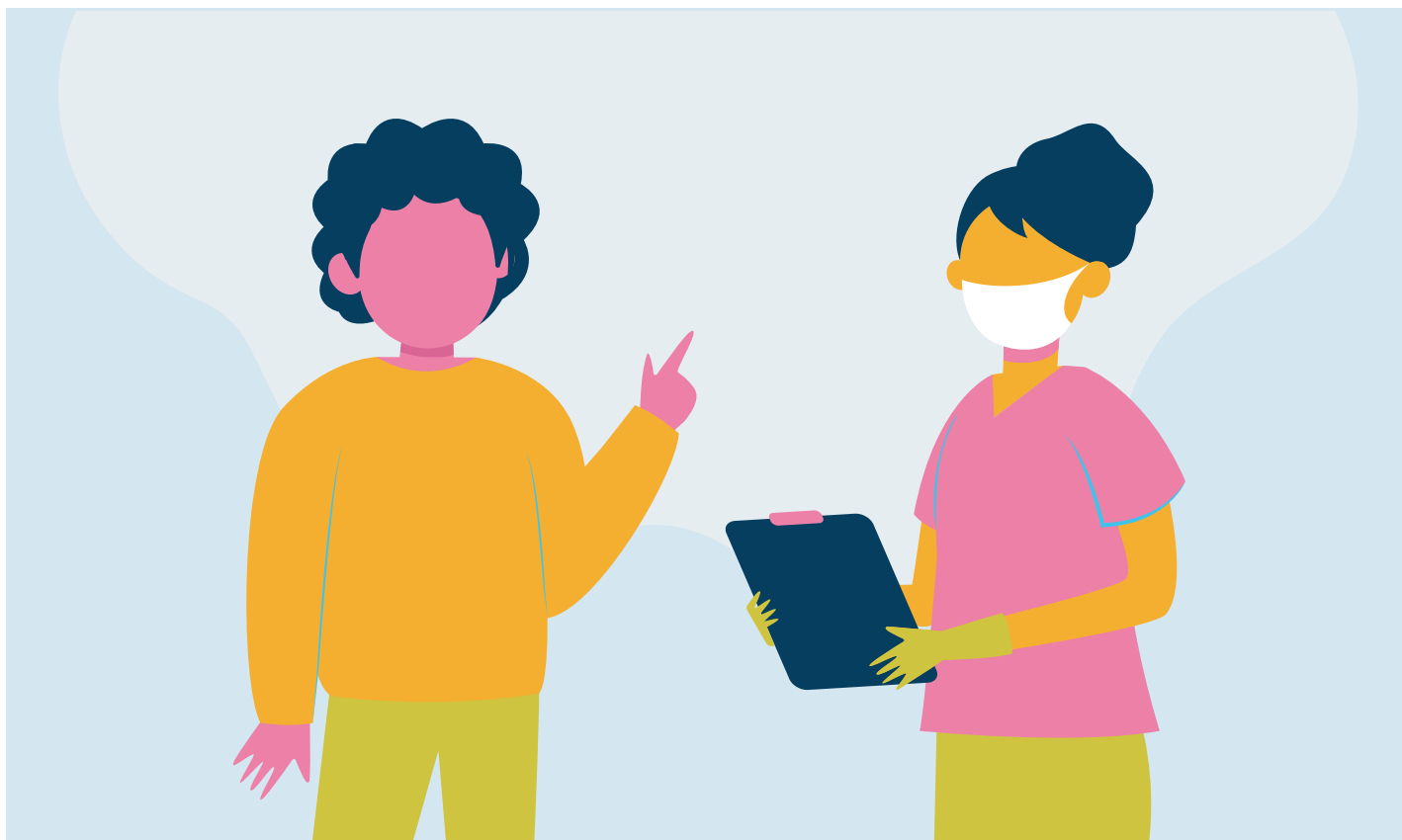
- **Social care workers and residents in care homes (with or without symptoms) to allow outbreaks to be**
- **investigated and as part of a programme to test all care homes**
- **NHS workers and patients without symptoms, in line with NHS England guidance**

For all non-essential workers or anyone with symptoms of the coronavirus, a test can be requested via the [NHS website](#).

A test can be requested for:

- **Yourself, if you have coronavirus symptoms now (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)**
- **For someone you live with if they have coronavirus symptoms**
- **For children under 5 years old who have symptoms of coronavirus and live with an essential worker.**
- **These tests must be completed by a parent or guardian**

Where staff are self-isolating, [employer referrals](#) can be made through the employer referral portal. Staff must contact their manager who will discuss this process.



Care Home Testing

If a service user has suspected coronavirus symptoms, the care home must contact their local health protection team if:

- **It suspects they has a new coronavirus outbreak**
- **It has been 28 days or longer since the last case and there are new ones**

The health protection team will provide advice and arrange the first tests.

For testing in other situations, the care home can apply for testing kits for service users and staff whether they have symptoms or not. Consent must be sought from staff and service users prior to the test being carried out, where service users may lack capacity to make a decision about their own testing, the care home should consider if the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 will allow a best interest decision to be made in relation to their testing.

An application for testing can be made by the registered manager [here](#). To apply, you will need:

- **Your CQC location ID**
- **The total number of residents**
- **The number of residents with coronavirus symptoms**
- **The total number of staff, including agency staff**
- **Contact details**

The registered manager will receive an email confirming when the tests will arrive and the type of test they will receive. There are two types of tests currently being sent to care homes, these are Randox test kits and all other types are known as Kingfisher test kits. They look similar and both test whether someone has coronavirus in the same way.



The Coronavirus Swab Test

- **The test will involve taking a swab of the inside of the nose and the back of the throat, using a long cotton bud swab.**
- **The test is an 'antigen test' and will test if the person currently has coronavirus.**
- **Testing kits are not available to purchase and cannot be obtained directly.**
- **Kits will only be supplied where the person is eligible to receive one. The test to identify if a person has had coronavirus ('antibody test') is not available yet.**

Care Worker Assessment Training

Prior to supporting anyone with a swab test, care home staff must complete the online Care Home Swabbing Online Individual Competency Assessment, which can be found [here](#).

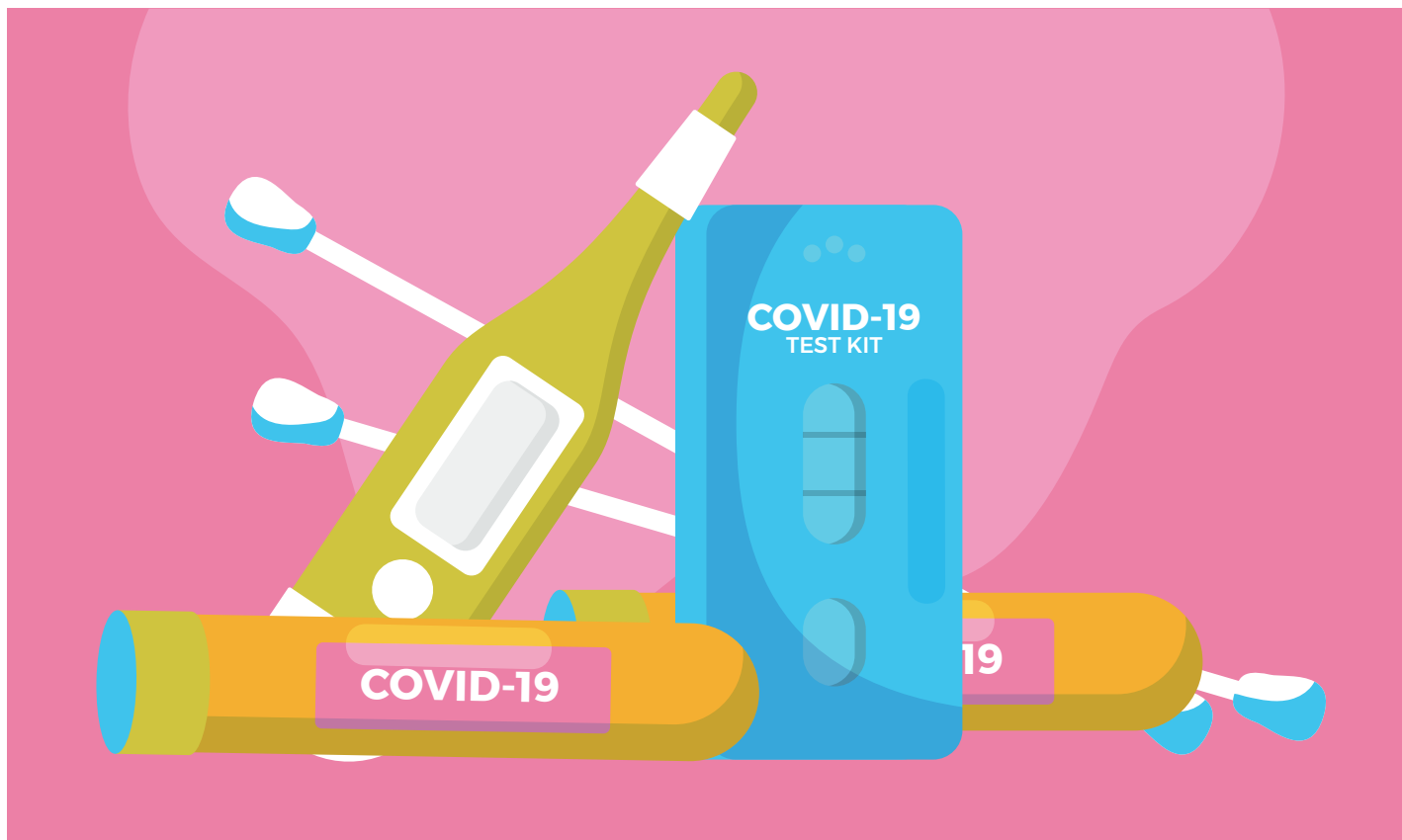
Care Home Preparation

Whilst waiting for the testing kits to arrive care home staff can prepare by:

- **Familiarising themselves with the testing guidance**
- **Ensuring that staff have completed the competency assessment training**
- **Discussing the testing process with service users and staff and where possible, conduct a mock practice test with them**

Guidance for each type of test kit has been provided by the Government and can be found [here](#).

A courier collection must be booked prior to completing the tests, this can be arranged [here](#). All tests should be completed on the date of the courier collection between 6am and 3pm, allowing an hour for packaging. The courier will collect completed test kits from the care home between 4pm and 10pm. Night staff must be captured during the morning testing.



Unused Test Kits

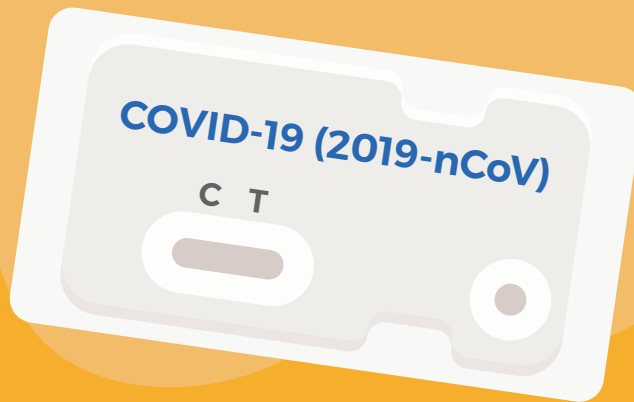
Any care home test kits not used must be kept for future ad hoc tests if required. Unused test kits must not be returned with the courier. Store test kits in a safe place with an ambient temperature of between 5°C and 22°C

In this initial phase of testing there is no ability to order further tests for the care home after an initial order to test all residents and staff. Once testing has been provided for all care homes, the offer for further orders for retesting will be looked at for those whose primary client type is older people (over 65 years) and those with dementia.

Test Kit Results

Test kit results can take up to 72 hours to be received back by care homes. Where tests have been registered online, results will be emailed across to the registered manager or the individual, where requested. Once received, results must be given to the service user, their GP and family members, where appropriate.

Staff members must keep a record of their own test URN/barcode and await an email of their results.



Home Testing Kits

If the staff member or service user from the community is eligible for a swab test, an option will be given for the test to be sent to their home or they can travel to a drive through testing site. Staff and service users are free to choose their preferred option but must consider the locality of the drive through and mobile testing sites. Where support is required with the testing, a home testing kit should be selected.

Where the person is completing the swab themselves, it is advised that they do this in front of a mirror.

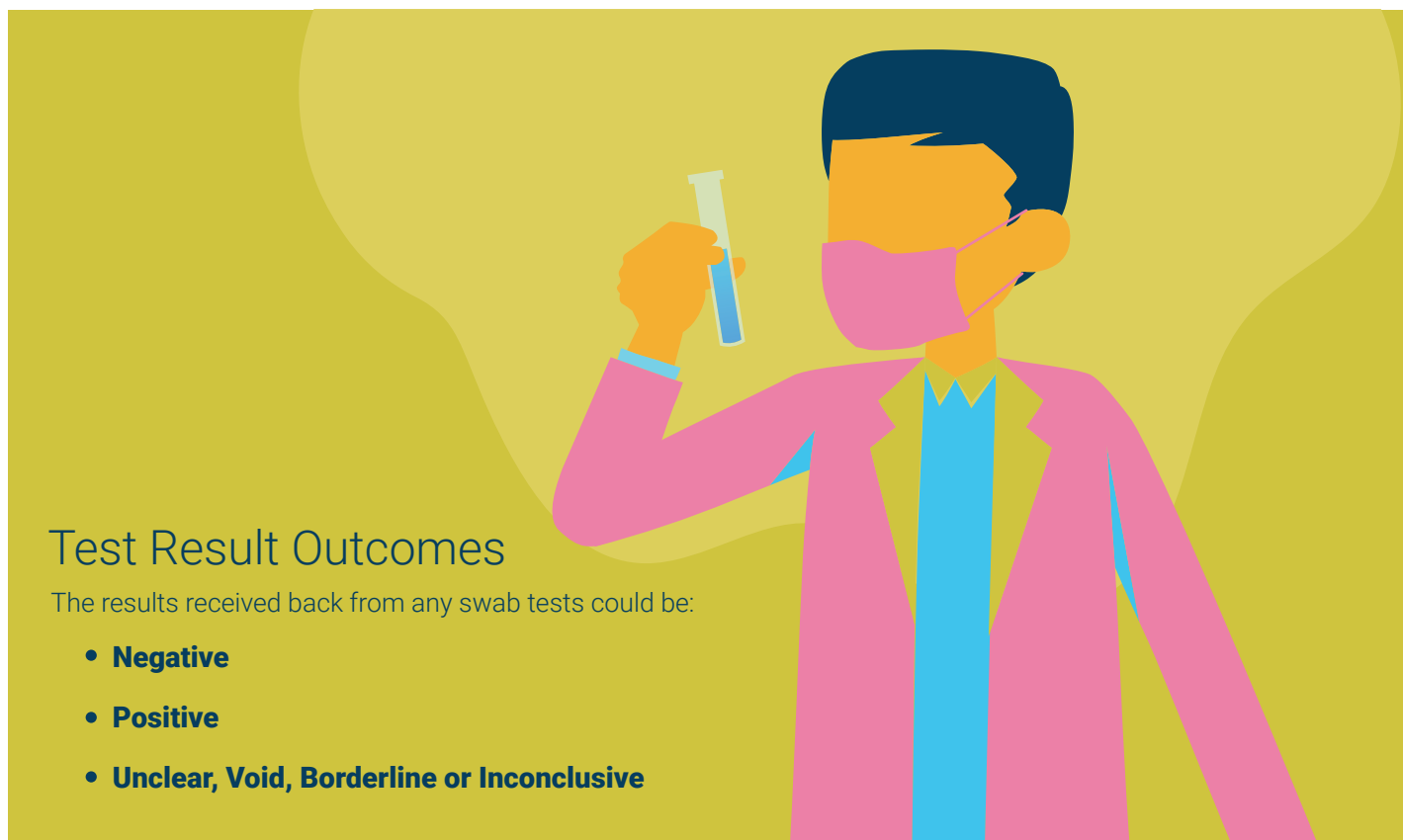
The testing kit will consist of:

- **A request form requiring the name, address, postcode, date of birth and NHS number of the person**
- **being tested**
- **A swab**
- **A small collection tube with liquid in (this is a special liquid that keeps the viruses from the swab preserved)**
- **A screw-top container to transport the samples (this may not be within all test kits)**
- **An instruction sheet**
- **A plastic envelope with no writing on (courier version)**
- **A plastic postage envelope with an address on, no stamp is required (postal version)**
- **A kit box**

Please note that the content may vary between kits. Correct PPE must be worn if someone is supporting another person with the test.

If the kit was supplied by a dedicated courier delivery service, it will need to be returned via the courier within the plastic envelope with no address. A postal version can be posted in a local post box by someone that is not displaying symptoms of coronavirus. The plastic envelope for this has the postal address included and no stamp is required.

Home test kit results can take up to 72 hours to be received back.



Test Result Outcomes

The results received back from any swab tests could be:

- **Negative**
- **Positive**
- **Unclear, Void, Borderline or Inconclusive**

Negative Result

A negative result means the individual did not have coronavirus when the test was done.

The person can stop self-isolating if they test negative, as long as:

- **Everyone they live with who has coronavirus symptoms also tests negative – keep self-isolating if someone in the home tests positive, or has symptoms and has not been tested**
- **They feel well – if they still feel unwell, they may have a different illness that could spread to other people, so they must stay at home until they are feeling better**

If the individual has diarrhea or they are being sick, they must stay at home until 48 hours after they have stopped.

Positive Result

A positive result means the individual had coronavirus when the test was done.

If an individual gets a positive result, they and anyone they live with should keep self-isolating. They must share information promptly about their recent contacts through the [NHS test and trace service](#) to help alert other people who may need to self-isolate. Where an individual has had close recent contact with someone who has coronavirus, they must self-isolate if the NHS test and trace service advises them to do so. They will be required to stay at home for 14 days. Staff must inform their employer when they are contacted by the test and trace service. Employer guidance can be found [here](#).

For information about how long to self-isolate, see [self-isolation if you or someone you live with has symptoms](#).



Unclear, Void, Borderline or Inconclusive Result

An unclear, void, borderline or inconclusive result means it is not possible to say for certain whether the individual has had coronavirus when the test was done.

If this happens, they may be advised to ask for another coronavirus test. This must be done as soon as possible, as the test is most accurate within a few days of the symptoms starting.

If the individual is not able to have another test, they and anyone they live with should keep self-isolating.

For information about how long to self-isolate, see self-isolation if you or someone you live with has symptoms.