

# Government to offer testing for “everyone who needs one” in social care settings

- All symptomatic care residents will be tested for COVID-19 as testing capacity continues to increase
- All patients discharged from hospital to be tested before going into care homes as a matter of course
- All social care staff who need a test will now have access to one with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to contact all 30,000 care providers in the coming days to offer tests

Currently the first 5 symptomatic residents in a care home setting are tested to provide confirmation of whether if there is an outbreak.

However, as lab capacity increases every day the government is expanding testing to include all care home residents who develop symptoms.

The safety of residents and staff is a priority and as such, testing will now also be provided to all potential care home residents before they are discharged from hospital. This will provide reassurance and peace of mind to residents and family members, and will help care providers to take appropriate action to ensure that social care workers and other residents are safe – including implementing isolation procedures for those who test positive.

The measures confirmed today are expected to be outlined further in the government’s COVID-19 social care action plan tomorrow, and will help give residents, their families and those that they care for peace of mind.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

I am deeply conscious that people in residential care are among the most vulnerable to coronavirus. We are doing everything we can to keep workers, residents and their families safe, and I am determined to ensure that everyone who needs a coronavirus test should be able to have access to one.

We have already begun testing social care workers and will roll this out nationwide over the coming days. And as we continue to ramp up our testing programme, we will test all current care home residents with coronavirus symptoms and all new care home residents who are discharged from hospital into care.

Testing is key in our battle against coronavirus, and as part of our plan to prevent the spread and save lives we will ensure that everyone in social care who needs a test can have a test.

As the rollout continues, the Health Secretary has confirmed that every social care worker who needs a test can now get one.

Dedicated testing has already begun for frontline staff, including social care workers and in addition to over 20,000 tests for NHS workers and their families.

As capacity grows further through the government's new mega labs, it will prioritise the testing of symptomatic social care workers and anyone in their household who have COVID-19 symptoms.

CQC are leading co-ordination of testing for the care sector, and have already offered 6,000 care facilities the opportunity to test their staff. By the end of the week they will have contacted all 30,000 care providers.

Care providers will identify workers eligible for testing and refer them to their local testing centre.

Tests for social care staff and residents will support the government to achieve its ambition of 100,000 COVID-19 tests a day by end of April.

- All of the tests are PCR tests.
- A small number of people may be discharged from the NHS within the 14-day period from the onset of COVID-19 symptoms who need ongoing social care. They will have been COVID-19 tested and have confirmed COVID-positive status. Some care providers will be able to accommodate these individuals through effective isolation strategies or cohorting policies.
- If appropriate isolation/cohorted care is not available with a local care provider, the individual's local authority will be asked to secure alternative appropriate accommodation and care for the remainder of the required isolation period.
- The government has made £1.3 billion available to support enhanced discharge from the NHS, and this funding can be drawn on for this alternative provision. The NHS discharge requirements will continue to apply.
- For people discharged asymptomatic into a care home – these individuals will have been tested prior to admission. Where these tests are negative, we still recommend isolation for 14 days. This will normally be in a care home that is able to meet that requirement, or it could be under alternative local authority made arrangements assisted by appropriate NHS primary and community based care.
- For individuals coming from the community we will move to these residents being tested prior to admission. The majority will have come from isolation in their own homes given social distancing and shielding policies. After discussion with the new resident and family, the care home may wish to isolate for a 14-day period following admission.