

Coronavirus testing extended to all essential workers in England who have symptoms

- The biggest widening of access to coronavirus testing made possible due to substantially increased testing capacity
- Essential workers with coronavirus symptoms can get tested, helping them return to work if test is negative
- Broad range of testing methods being rolled-out to increase accessibility, including home testing kits, mobile testing sites and satellite testing kits
- New campaign to provide clear information for essential workers on how to get a test

All [essential workers](#) in England, and members of their households who are showing symptoms of coronavirus will now be able to get tested, the government has announced.

This will mean individuals and people they live with will have the reassurance of knowing whether their symptoms are caused by coronavirus and can decide whether they are well enough to return to work.

A new campaign will help essential workers in England – including NHS and care staff, teachers, hospital cleaners, public servants, the emergency services, supermarket staff, delivery drivers, and other critical infrastructure staff – to access testing.

Booking the test has been made simpler via a new online system. From today, employers can register and refer self-isolating staff, and from tomorrow employees will be able to book a test directly for themselves or members of their household who are experiencing symptoms – a high temperature or new continuous cough.

This will speed up the process of getting an appointment and take the burden off employers, helping reach everyone who has symptoms at the earliest opportunity.

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

“We have already prioritised testing for patients and health and social care workers and other key workers today I can go further.

“We are making it easier, faster and simpler for any essential worker in England who needs a test to get a test. From today, employers of essential workers will be able to go on GOV.UK to get a test for any of their staff who need a test. And from tomorrow, any essential workers who need a test will be able to book an appointment on GOV.UK themselves directly.

“This all applies for people in essential workers’ households who need a test

too. It's all part of getting Britain back on her feet."

Essential workers using the new portal can enter their details and will then receive a text or email the same day inviting them to either book an appointment at one of more than 30 drive-through testing sites across the country, or receive a home testing kit.

Test results from the drive-through sites will be sent out by text within 48 hours, and within 72 hours of collection of the home delivery tests.

The aim is that most people should not have to drive for more than 45 minutes to get to a regional testing site. However, additional testing methods are being rolled-out to support testing accessibility:

- A network of new mobile testing units is being rapidly established. These will travel the country to reach care homes, police stations, prisons and other sites where there is demand for testing. The units have been designed to clinical requirements by army engineers and can be easily set up in under 20 minutes.
- The new mobile units will work alongside the drive-through test sites, together sending thousands of patient samples to the network of Lighthouse Labs, to rapidly increase the number of tests completed each day.
- A delivery service for home testing kits has been designed with key industry partners, including Royal Mail and Amazon. The home delivery service will come on line from tomorrow. The availability of home testing kits will initially be limited, but more will become available soon. This will ensure those not able to travel to a test centre can still take the test, find out their results and return to work if possible.
- Working with Public Health England, the Care Quality Commission and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the government is sending packages of 'satellite' test kits directly to care homes across England, to enable testing of symptomatic residents.

Since the beginning of April, the government has significantly increased the UK's coronavirus testing capacity and is on track to provide 100,000 tests a day by the end of the month.

The 3 new Lighthouse Labs in Milton Keynes, Glasgow and Alderley Park in Cheshire are increasing the country's capacity to test for coronavirus, with each site scaling up to test tens of thousands of patient samples each day. Each individual site took just 3 weeks to complete and begin testing, staffed by an army of highly qualified staff and volunteers from industry and academia across the country.

Under the government's [five-pillar strategy](#), swab testing has been offered to different groups in a phased approach, prioritising NHS workers, but the ultimate aim is that anyone who needs a test will be able to have one.

Testing helps the government and scientists understand the current spread of the virus and plan how to manage the pandemic moving forwards.

Anyone who thinks they are eligible and has symptoms and would like to be tested should speak to their employer or use the self-referral website to request a test.

The response to coronavirus is a national effort. The government is working collaboratively across the four nations to ensure the take up of testing among essential workers. Each of the devolved administrations will have their own eligibility criteria and testing priorities, however the government is working closely to align approaches.

[Weekly COVID-19 surveillance report published](#)

Latest update

The latest Public Health England [COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary](#) published on Friday 28 August 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology, mortality surveillance and sero-prevalence surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

The surveillance report has been updated to include an overview of upper tier local authorities (UTLA) with the highest incidence rates and the Contain Framework Local Authority Watchlist. The watchlist combines a range of indicators to highlight local authorities of greatest concern.

You can see a fuller explanation of some of the data sources and how and why we carry out this surveillance in our [blog](#).

Previous updates

Friday 21 August 2020

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Friday 7 August 2020

The latest Public Health England [COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary](#) published today, Friday 7 August 2020.

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Friday 31 July 2020

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Thursday 23 July 2020

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Friday 17 July 2020

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Thursday 9 July 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 9 July 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology, mortality surveillance and sero-prevalence surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 2 July 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 2 July 2020.

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Thursday 25 June 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 25 June 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology, mortality surveillance and sero-prevalence surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 18 June 2020

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Thursday 11 June 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 11 June 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology, mortality surveillance and sero-prevalence surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 4 June 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 4 June 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology, mortality surveillance and sero-prevalence surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 28 May 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 28 May 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology, mortality surveillance and sero-prevalence surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 21 May 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 21 May 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology and mortality surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 14 May 2020

The latest Public Health England COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 14 May 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology and mortality surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 7 May 2020

The latest Public Health England (PHE) COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary is published today, Thursday 7 May 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology and mortality surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography, which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 30 April 2020

The latest PHE COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary published today, Thursday 30 April 2020.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology and mortality surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

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Thursday 23 April 2020

Public Health England will be publishing a COVID-19 epidemiology surveillance summary on a weekly basis at 2pm each Thursday.

The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology and mortality surveillance data. Combined these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

Disease surveillance is one of PHE's core functions and involves gathering data from a range of sources to understand the areas and groups most affected by an outbreak, whether symptoms are getting more severe and when the outbreak might have peaked.

The [surveillance summary is available here](#) and each week's report will be accompanied by an [infographic](#).

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Thousands more Britons to return to UK on new India charter flights

Once completed, these additional flights will bring the total number of people flown to the UK from India on Government charter flights to over 13,000.

Details of the flights are as follows:

- Amritsar to the UK on 28 April, 29 April, 30 April, 1 May, 2 May (x 2), 3 May, 4 May
- Ahmedabad to the UK on 28 April, 29 April, 1 May, 3 May, 4 May,
- Delhi to the UK on 30 April.

The Government has now chartered 52 flights from India to bring stranded British travellers home.

There has been a huge demand for these flights, with seats now being allocated to those already registered via the government's online booking portal – CTM.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Travel to and from India is severely restricted and so we have organised a series of charter flights.

Through these 52 UK charter flights, we will have brought back 13,000 people and our staff in India will continue to support all those UK nationals who need our help.

Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

We have already helped over 6,500 people return from India since we began our charter flight programme, with a further 7,000 due to return in the coming weeks.

The 14 new flights announced today bring the total number of UK

government charter flights from India to 52.

We are continuing to work around the clock to ensure all British travellers in India are supported to come back to the UK if they wish.

Since the coronavirus outbreak began, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) has worked consistently with governments, air carriers and travel companies to minimise disruption and help British travellers return home safely – supported with £75 million for special charter flights to priority countries, focused on helping the most vulnerable people.

More than 13,200 people have returned to the UK on 63 flights organised by the FCO from 18 different countries and territories, including over 700 from Pakistan, over 1,700 from South Africa and over 1,200 from Peru.

Further information

- The charter flights are for British nationals who normally reside in the UK and their direct dependants.
- Details regarding flights, luggage allowance and costs are available on the India Travel Advice page.
- Seats on these flights are only available to those already registered and on a waitlist.
- Those who are eligible to fly will be sent information on how to get to airports and flight itineraries directly when their seat is confirmed.
- The British High Commission continues to provide consular support to any British nationals who remain in India. Consular helpline numbers: New Delhi: +91 (11) 2419 2100; Chennai: +91 (44) 42192151; Mumbai/Goa: +91 (22) 6650 2222.
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Councils given flexibility with free childcare funding

Councils will be able to move around government funding for free childcare entitlements in exceptional circumstances, to make sure sufficient childcare places are available for vulnerable children and those of critical workers.

The Government has confirmed that councils will temporarily be able to use the funding they receive for the free entitlements for two, three and four-year-olds differently, redistributing it where absolutely necessary for the benefit of critical workers and the parents of the most vulnerable children,

when their usual arrangements are no longer possible as a result of Coronavirus.

This builds on existing commitments to continue paying free entitlement funding – worth £3.6 billion a year – to local authorities throughout the Coronavirus outbreak. Childcare businesses will also benefit from other support schemes, including a business rates holiday, the Small Business grant for those that don't pay business rates, the Self-Employment Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

On Friday (17 April) the Department for Education published [guidance](#) to set out how the CJRS and free entitlement funding interact, confirming that early years providers can access the CJRS to cover the proportion of their income considered to have been paid from private income, such as parent fees. Any setting which sees their early entitlement funding reduced in order to fund childcare places elsewhere will be able to increase the proportion of their salary bill eligible for the CJRS.

New guidance will be published to support councils with the steps they will need to take if moving around government funding between settings, where all other options have been explored and more childcare places are still needed locally for children for the duration of the Coronavirus outbreak.

In addition, to provide further support to early years settings who are staying open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, providers will be given greater flexibility in meeting some of the requirements in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. This is to manage expectations and reduce burdens during an unpredictable time for the sector.

Children's safety remains the priority for the duration of these temporary changes, and safeguarding and welfare requirements will still remain a requirement with the exception of a small number of changes, including staff qualification requirements to allow flexibility around staffing, in recognition of the challenges facing employers whose staff may have to remain at home.

Children's Minister Vicky Ford said:

Our early years professionals are central to this country's response to the coronavirus outbreak, and I'm grateful for their work to continue providing safe and high-quality childcare for those who need it the most: critical workers and parents of vulnerable children.

Councils are best placed to respond to the childcare needs in their area, so it's right that we give them extra support to face these unprecedented challenges. They can use flexibility to redistribute entitlements funding in exceptional cases where other options have been exhausted, helping nurseries and other settings stay open and

making sure enough childcare places are available.

The government continues to monitor the early years sector and provide support where possible, including guidance that is currently regularly updated and a range of business support available through the government.

Glasgow COVID-19 Mega Lab Opens

Funded by the UK Government, the Lighthouse Laboratory in Glasgow is part of what will be the biggest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history, alongside other Lighthouse Lab sites in Milton Keynes and Alderley Park. All have been opened in recent days.

The newly operational lab will test samples from the regional centres where NHS staff and frontline workers with suspected COVID-19 infections are tested. It is hoped the lab will quickly move towards processing several thousand tests per day, before scaling up further to tens of thousands of tests per day.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

The UK Government has committed to expanding our testing capacity across the UK. The completion of our network with the Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow is a tremendous achievement for all the partners in such challenging circumstances and only five weeks after this project was started.

Scotland has world-class universities and I am pleased they have been involved in this UK-wide effort as we work together to protect the NHS and save lives. Dr Jodie Hay, a Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia researcher at the University of Glasgow, is one of the volunteers at The Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow. A cancer scientist with experience of working with patient samples and molecular lab techniques, Dr Hay volunteered so she could use her skills to help with COVID-19 response in the UK.

The Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow is hosted by the University of Glasgow at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital Campus.

Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak, University of Glasgow Vice Principal and Head of the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, who leads the team said:

I am pleased that after weeks of hard work and continued effort by

all involved, the University of Glasgow can now deliver the country new, large-scale testing facility, in conjunction with our industry partners and the NHS.

I remain incredibly grateful to all partners and colleagues who have volunteered their time, expertise and skills for this testing facility. As a result of their willingness to help, we have equipped, staffed and set-up a new testing facility that is now operational and will be vitally important in the NHS efforts against this coronavirus pandemic. It has been said all over the world and confirmed by the WHO that we have to test, test and test more to fight the virus that has killed so many.

The Glasgow facility will be staffed on a 24/7 basis by around 100 staff members. More than 800 volunteers came forward to help with the facility, including highly experienced molecular scientists, technicians and bioinformaticians – all with the relevant skills and experience to carry out COVID-19 testing.

Dr Hay said:

I was one of the first volunteers selected to begin working in the Lighthouse Lab in Glasgow and it has been incredible to see how quickly everyone has been able to get this lab up and running so that we can begin processing the testing samples.

Like my other colleagues working in the lab, we volunteered so that we could use the skills and expertise we have from our usual lab work in this response against COVID-19. Although these are challenging times, it feels positive to be able to use my skills and experience in this way and to be able to help.

The facility has been made possible through the work and commitment of partners, volunteers and University of Glasgow staff, including lab technicians, IT services and colleagues from the Professional Services across the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences in Glasgow.