

Coronavirus National Testing Programme for Frontline Workers

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Any employee with concerns should visit the appropriate health authority website if you think you have symptoms, or may have been exposed to the virus and are unsure what to do:

- England: [NHS 111 online](#)
- Scotland: [NHS Inform](#)
- Wales: [NHS Direct Wales](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Public Health Agency](#)

What is the National Testing Programme?

The National Testing Programme provides coronavirus tests to frontline workers or symptomatic members of their household as part of the UK governments plan to increase testing.

At present the testing is available in England and Northern Ireland and new test centres are opening in regions daily. Access to testing in Scotland and Wales will be communicated once we are informed this is available.

Getting tested is important, so you can have clarity on whether you, or a family member, has the coronavirus and then you can either return to work or continue to isolate yourself and your household.

Who can get tested?

As an identified frontline worker organisation, Royal Mail Group fully supports the National Testing Programme. You are eligible for testing if:

- a) you are within the first three days of having coronavirus symptoms – a new continuous cough or high temperature and are following government guidelines on self-isolating;
- b) a member of your household has coronavirus symptoms meaning you are self-isolating in line with government guidelines in which case the household member attends for testing.

How quickly from getting symptoms should I be tested?

Guidelines for testing specify that individuals **should be in the first three days of the onset of your symptoms at the time the swab is taken**. It is therefore vital that eligible employees or members of their household undertake testing as soon as possible.

Is being tested voluntary?

Yes the service is entirely voluntary and confidential.

Where will I be tested?

The test will take place at one of the UK governments regional test sites, currently only available in England or Northern Ireland. The sites operate a drive-through model, meaning you or a member of your household must drive to the site.

We regret that testing is not possible for people who arrive on foot, take public transport or a taxi.

What does the test involve?

The test involves taking a swab of the nose and throat. At some testing sites you may be given a simple kit and instructions on how to do the test yourself. The swab will then be sent for testing.

How will I receive test results?

You will receive your results by text or email within 48 hours of taking the test. Please ensure you enter the correct contact details when you register.

What will the test tell me?

The test will confirm if an individual who is showing symptoms of the disease actually has it. It will not confirm if you have had it and have now recovered.

Do I continue to self-isolate following the test?

Yes in line with Public Health England guidance please continue to self-isolate while awaiting the test result.

How do I get tested?

To receive a test, please use the following process:

1. Employee reports symptoms to manager on day one (or by day three for existing cases).
2. Manager should consider:
 - a. how practical it is for the employee to attend the nearest test site taking into account the distance between the employee's home address and the test site;
 - b. employee eligibility in line with government criteria; and
 - c. can the employee drive/be driven to the site (public transport, walking or taking a taxi is not allowed).
3. Manager highlights the voluntary option of a test via a test site and emails a [template letter](#) to the employee with the details for getting tested and the online registration link. If a personal email address is not available then the letter should be posted.
4. Manager highlights the essential timeline 'window' to be tested (within the first three days of showing symptoms) and requests to be updated on the test result.
5. Employee registers for the test using the online form using the link provided in the [template letter](#).
6. Employee takes their Royal Mail issued staff ID and confirmation email with them to the test centre which are usually open 10:00 – 16:00.
7. Employee receives results by text or email within 48 hours of taking the test and chooses if they would like to update their manager with the result.
8. Subject to the result the employee and manager will agree next steps e.g. self-isolation absence or return to work.

What should I do when I arrive at the Regional Test Site?

Full instruction and location details and will be sent to you in your confirmation email. You must present your **Royal Mail issued staff ID** on arrival along with the confirmation email.

Test Sites are usually open 10:00 – 16:00. This [helpful video](#) shows you what to expect when you arrive.

Can colleagues or household members under 18 years of age be tested?

Yes, eligible frontline workers under 18 years of age can be tested, **although testing for children is available at specific sites so please check first.**

If a frontline worker is self-isolating due to an under-18 year old in their household showing symptoms of the coronavirus, that child can also be tested.

A parent or guardian must perform the swab test on 5-11-year olds. 12-18-year olds can perform the test on themselves. The test is unsuitable for under-fives and current NHS guidance should be followed:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

There's a test centre near me, can I go?

No, testing is by appointment only for eligible frontline workers only.

I do not have my Royal Mail issued ID, what do I do?

Where you do not have your ID, you will be asked to present the confirmation email. Please make arrangements to replace your ID with your line manager if you have not already done so.

Why can't I be tested / why aren't we testing everyone?

The availability of testing is determined by the UK government and currently restricted to:

- a) you have coronavirus symptoms – a new continuous cough or high temperature and are following government guidelines on self-isolating; **or**
- b) a member of your household has coronavirus symptoms meaning you are self-isolating in line with government guidelines in which case the householder member attends for testing.

Should testing become more widely available to additional frontline workers this will be communicated.

Do I have to share a copy of my test results to my manager?

Your manager will request to be updated with the test result. It is the individual's responsibility to communicate their own, or their household member's, test result to their employer and together discuss a return to work.

We do hope as part of the role we all have in preventing the spread of coronavirus that employees who test positive inform their manager who can support their absence and ensure unit cleaning where appropriate.

Where can I go for further advice and support?

If you are a manager visit the internal [Coronavirus Information Page](#), email coronavirus.support@royalmail.com or call 0345 604 3657.

Front line colleagues should visit www.myroyalmail.com/coronavirus or email coronavirus.advice@royalmail.com.