

## Coronavirus (Covid-19) Testing in Care Homes Policy

### Policy Statement

This policy should be used in relation to the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Management for Care Homes Policy](#), which sets out the approach of this care service to its management of the coronavirus outbreak and of service users who have become ill with Covid-19. This policy describes the arrangements it has put in place for the testing of service users and staff following the Government's extension of its testing programme to enable care home residents and staff to carry out their own in-house testing procedures.

The policy is based on the recommendation that care homes should have access to testing so that it can identify individuals who might have the coronavirus but who are not showing any signs of illness and could spread the virus as a result. It accepts the recommendation that everyone in regular contact with the home and its residents should be tested if possible and subject to retesting where that is indicated.

There are separate procedures for residents or staff with symptoms of Covid-19 disease (fever, cough shortness of breath, etc), which basically require their isolation or self-isolation and testing by other means. (See government guidance on this on the [GOV.UK website](#).)

Where there is any suspicion of a new outbreak (two or more people with disease symptoms), the home will follow local protocols for contacting health protection teams for advice and further instruction. Care staff with symptoms should immediately self-isolate and arrange any testing through self-referral or employer routes.

### Preparations for In-house Testing

The Downes recognises that the testing of everyone linked to the home will be a major undertaking and must plan and prepare carefully. The staff responsible for both organising and carrying out the testing will:

- have successfully made the application for the test kits through the online portal being used on the [GOV.UK website](#), supplying all the correct information required for the application
- ensure that they know the type of test kit being used and the procedures and protocols involved from study of the official guidance and instructions (found on the [GOV.UK website](#))
- ensure that they are competent to carry out the procedures involved by watching the training video *Coronavirus Test Tutorial for Care Homes with Dr. Sarah Jarvis* (available on the [GOV.UK website](#)) and completing the online self-assessment tool
- discuss the purpose of the testing with residents and staff and the procedures involved and address any concerns arising

- identify who will wish and be able to carry out the procedure themselves and ensure that these self-testers can do so competently and safely
- prepare carefully those who are being tested by care staff, ensuring they know what to expect
- ensure that they obtain everyone's consent to being tested and respect any wishes of those who refuse to give their consent (see [Coronavirus testing consent forms](#))
- follow all mental capacity law best interests' assessment procedures for anyone without capacity to give their informed consent
- prepare the personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used, ensuring there is sufficient supplies of what is required
- check for the email announcing date of delivery of the test kits
- organise a schedule for the conducting and recording of the testing using at least the two staff members as officially recommended: one to conduct the test and the other to record the relevant information needed for registration
- ensure in advance a courier has been booked to collect the samples taken on a specified day through [www.carehomecollect.co.uk](http://www.carehomecollect.co.uk) — at least by 7pm the day before testing.

## Carrying Out the Testing

- Check that everything is in place to begin testing having taken delivery of the test kits.
- Carry out the testing in line with the schedule.
- Work to the recommended timetable of testing no later than 3pm to allow for the samples to be got ready for collection.
- Ensure that everyone follows the instructions for the swabbing (nasal and mouth) and the handling, recording and packaging of the sample (with barcode number and time of each test put against the name of the person tested).
- Register the completed test online as close as possible to the time of the swab.
- Wait for the collection of the samples by the appointed courier.

## Post Testing and Results

- Await the results which should be delivered within 72 hours.
- Notify, as appropriate, the resident, GP and family of the test result on a “need to know” (taking into account confidentiality issues).
- Take appropriate actions if the test result is positive (applying agreed infection control measures) or inconclusive (where retesting might be needed).

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#care-home>.

## Training

All staff involved in the testing procedures will receive the appropriate training and be assessed as competent to carry out their allocated roles and responsibilities.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy review date: \_\_\_\_\_