

Covid-19: Test and Trace Guide



Introduction

The Test and Trace system introduced by the UK government is intended to become a central part of the strategy in the fight to get the coronavirus pandemic under control. Thus far the tactic has been to close many workplaces, impose a severe but essential lockdown strategy on the UK population with millions of workers being sent home.

The concept is to identify those who have the coronavirus and their direct contacts - so are potentially infectious - then isolate that group. Thus replacing the current blanket isolation of millions of people in their homes for months, with a system that isolates those who present the highest risk of passing on infection in temporary isolation for one or two weeks. The system has proved very successful in countries such as South Korea and Germany

<https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/23/test-trace-contain-how-south-korea-flattened-its-coronavirus-curve>

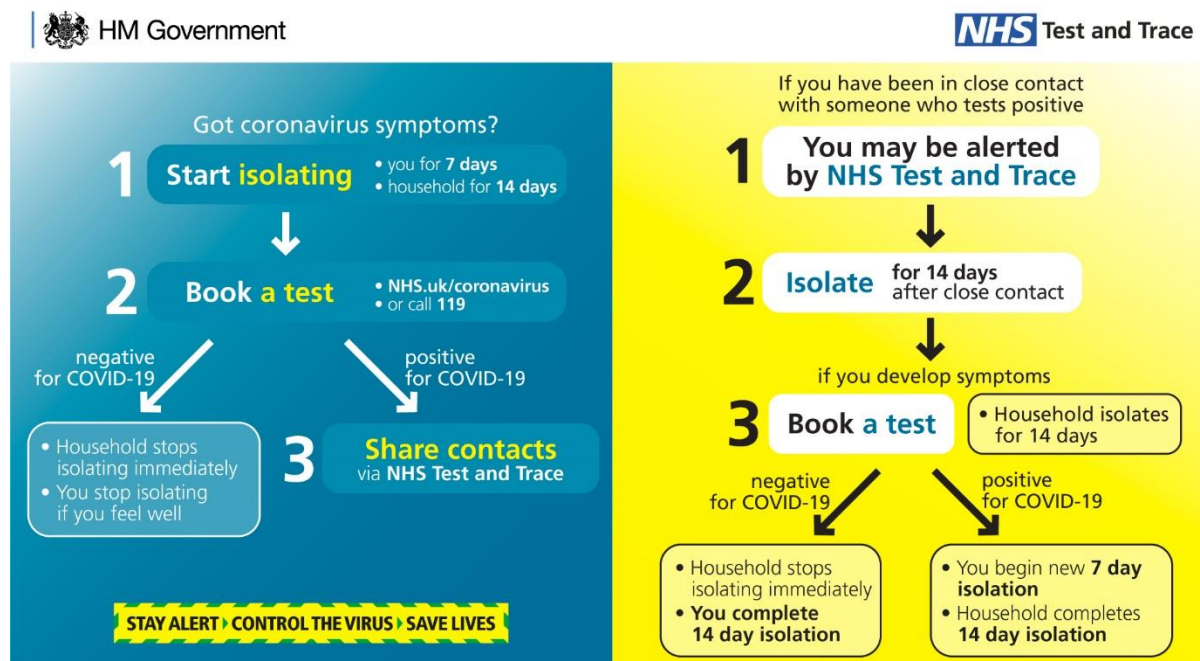
<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/germany-covid-19-masterclass-testing-tracing-uk>

While this guide concentrates on giving practical advice on the test and trace system, unions will have clear expectations as to how this system should operate. In addition we expect the system to be robust incorporating the right technology and have adequate and trained personnel operating the system, using the right communication mediums.

Unite principles

- Unite to be consulted in order to produce further guidelines for the process
- Unite and reps consulted on all aspects of the system in every workplace
- Employees to receive full pay when self - isolating or when attending test centres
- It must be recognised that this could happen to a worker on multiple occasions
- All those in a workplace should be entitled to the same treatment whether or not they are full time employees
- Workers - including casual agency workers - to access testing without detriment
- Ensure workers in at-risk groups and workers who are family, friends or carers for individuals who are at greater risk are prioritised but that all workers can be tested
- Ensure home testing is available for workers who cannot travel safely to test sites for example: lack of transport, health conditions, mobility issues, caring responsibilities
- Respect for existing privacy rules including those embedded in GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations)
- Employers prevented from having access to data gleaned from any state-run app that is rolled out
- Unite and reps to be consulted in workplaces if an employer starts to collect data

Implications for testing and self-isolation



When to self-isolate

The medical advice is clear: **You must self-isolate if you have coronavirus symptoms or live in the same household as somebody who does.**

Situation 1 – An individual has coronavirus symptoms and gets a test.

- The individual is not known to have had any close contact with anyone who has tested positive. Therefore, if they test negative, they are not required to continue self-isolation.

Situation 2 – An individual is contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service and informed that they have had close contact with someone who has Covid-19.

The individual develops symptoms and gets a test.

- If they test positive, they begin a new 7 day isolation.
- If they test negative, they should still complete the 14 day isolation.

This is because the individual has been identified as a contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. They could still develop the virus and it cannot be confirmed that they haven't picked it up until the maximum 14 day incubation period has elapsed.

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- High temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- New, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

For more information, read the further [guidance on symptoms](#).

HOW THE NHS TEST AND TRACE SERVICE WORKS

Someone with symptoms of coronavirus

1. Isolate: as soon as you experience coronavirus symptoms, medical advice is clear: you must self-isolate for at least 7 days. Anyone else in your household must self-isolate for 14 days from when you started having symptoms
2. Test: order a test immediately at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access
3. Results: if your test is positive, you must complete the remainder of your 7-day self-isolation. Anyone in your household must also complete self-isolation for 14 days from when you started having symptoms. If your test is negative, you and other household members no longer need to self-isolate
4. Share contacts: if you test positive for coronavirus, the NHS test and trace service will send you a text or email alert or call you with instructions of how to share details of people with whom you have had close, recent contact and places you have visited. It is important that you respond as soon as possible so that we can give appropriate advice to those who need it. You will be told to do this online via a secure website or you will be called by one of our contract tracers.

If you are contacted by the NHS test and trace service because you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus

1. Alert: you will be alerted by the NHS test and trace service if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. The alert will usually come by text, email or phone call. You should then log on to the NHS test and trace website, which is normally the easiest way for you and the service to communicate with each other – but, if not, a trained call handler will talk you through what you must do. Under-18s will get a phone call and a parent or guardian will be asked to give permission for the call to continue

2. Isolate: you will be told to begin self-isolation for 14 days from your last contact with the person who has tested positive. It's really important to do this even if you don't feel unwell because, if you have been infected, you could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days. Your household doesn't need to self-isolate with you, if you do not have symptoms, but they must take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing and handwashing and avoid contact with you at home
3. Test if needed: if you develop symptoms of coronavirus, other members of your household must self-isolate immediately at home for 14 days and you must book a test at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access. If your test is positive, you must continue to stay at home for at least 7 days and we will get in touch to ask about your contacts since they must self-isolate. If your test is negative, you must still complete your 14-day self-isolation period because the virus may not be detectable yet - this is crucial to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.

How to order a test

Inform the NHS about your symptoms as soon as possible and get a test to find out if you have coronavirus. The sooner you have a test, the sooner they can let you know if you and other members of your household must remain in self-isolation.

Members of the public can order a test through the [NHS website](#).

If you are an essential worker or an employer, please visit:

- [Essential workers](#)
- [Employers](#)

If you don't have access to the internet, you can order a test by phoning 119.

The government's [guidance on testing](#) has more information on the testing program.

Health and care workers

If you work in a health or care setting, you should follow the separate [guidance for health and care workers on testing](#) and when to return to work.

Further information for Reps

Employers should support workers who are told to self-isolate and not ask them to attend work: [guidance on the NHS test and trace service for employers, businesses and workers](#).

TUC T&T Covid-19: How to ensure fair access and manage monitoring in the workplace
<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/Testing%20and%20Tracing.pdf>

Contract Tracing Advisory Service (CTAS) tier system operation

Tier 1 – undertaken by a Health Professional

- Patients with symptoms & being tested
- PHE notified
- Case created on Contract Tracing Advisory Service system (CTAS)
- Text message/email sent to Patient to prompt Contact Tracing Advisory Service website registration /reminder
- Patient download Info into Contact Tracing Advisory Service website

Tier 2 – undertaken by clinically-experienced staff who conduct interviews with confirmed cases

- Undertake a public health risk assessment identify contacts and deal with situations escalated from Tier 3.
- Collect details of people the patients have been near to
- Initial Call to confirmed Patient
- Gather trace information
- Update CTAS with contact details
- Completes additional check-up calls

Tier 3 - Undertaken by contracted non-clinical call centre agents to provide public health advice

- Contact record on CTAS
- Advise contact been exposed to a recent confirmed case, how they are feeling, any symptoms and what to do.
- Gather contacts of contact person
- Signpost to relevant web sites
- Update CTAS
- Close call