Covid-19: Test and Trace Guide

Introduction

The Test and Trace system introduce 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 an infection in temporary isolation for one or two weeks. The system has proved very successful in countries such as South Korea and Germany – see: 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

Self-isolate immediately if:

- You have any symptoms of coronavirus

- You've tested positive for coronavirus – this means you have coronavirus

- You live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive

- Someone in your support bubble has symptoms or has tested positive

- You're told by NHS Test and Trace that you've been in contact with a person with coronavirus

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.

Testing and Tracing: Management Information

Information for the UK and by Country
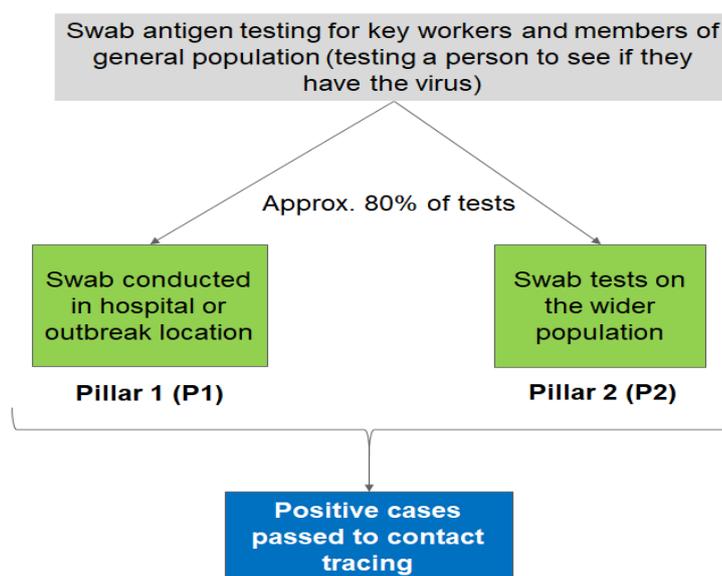
HOW THE NHS TEST AND TRACE SERVICE WORKS

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 10 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 10-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 10 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 Testing & Tracing Covid-19](#): How to ensure fair access and manage monitoring in the workplace [TUC PDF]

Get an isolation note

Use this **[Get an isolation note](#)** service if you have been told to self-isolate because of coronavirus and you need a note for your employer.

This service is only for people who:

- Have symptoms of coronavirus
- Live with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus
- In a support bubble with someone who has symptoms of coronavirus
- Have been told to self-isolate by a test and trace service

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

NHS APP

NHS App for England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and ROI also have a system in place.

On Thursday,24 September the government launched the NHS COVID-19 app, which will use QR codes to enable people to check-in with their phone on arrival when visiting certain venues, instead of filling out a check-in book or business-specific tool.

To ensure that the NHS COVID-19 app is effective, businesses who are expected to keep a log of customers and visitors at certain venues will be **legally required** to display NHS QR code posters by Thursday,24 September on entry points to their establishments and will face fines for failure to comply.

This includes all venues from the following sectors:

- hospitality
- leisure and tourism
- close contact services
- places of worship
- local authority venues.

Businesses who are already using their own QR code system must also use the NHS Test and Trace QR code system.

These QR codes will be an important way for NHS Test and Trace to contact customers with public health advice should there be a COVID-19 outbreak.

An alternative check-in method must also be used to collect the contact details of people who don't have the app, to ensure that businesses meet their legal requirement to record the contact details of customers, visitors and staff on their premises.

What do they need to do?

- Read the guidance.
- Generate, download and print a QR code poster for venue.
- Display QR code posters in an accessible place near entry points

QR code posters are quick and easy to generate and download, and should only take a few minutes to prepare.

The government has prepared guidance and a video to help you as well as tips for how to correctly display the posters [PDF].

Six key features of the NHS App

Introducing the NHS COVID-19 app [PDF].

Trace

For contact tracing, the app detects and logs other nearby app users using random unique IDs. If any of those users later test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), you will receive an exposure alert with advice on what to do. If you are under 18, you are advised to show this alert to a trusted adult.

Alert

When you first register for the app you will be asked for the first half of your postcode. You can check the app every day to see whether where you live has become a high risk area for coronavirus. If it is, you will also receive a notification to let you know. This will help you make daily decisions to protect yourself and those you love.

Check in

The app allows you to record when you visit a venue by "checking-in" when you arrive, using the venue's QR code.

The app records the time you spend at the venue without recording any personal information. You will receive an alert, if you have recently visited a venue where you have come into contact with coronavirus

Symptoms

If you feel unwell, you can use the app to check if your symptoms could be related to coronavirus (COVID-19). The app will give you a list of potential symptoms and you can then choose the ones that apply to you. It will then tell you if your symptoms suggest you have coronavirus.

Test

If you have coronavirus symptoms, the app will take you to a website where you can book a test to see if you have coronavirus or not.

Isolate

If you have been advised by the app to self-isolate, the app provides a countdown timer so that you can keep track of how long you need to self-isolate. When you reach the end of your self-isolation period, the app will send you a notification reminder with a link to the latest advice for you. If you are under 18, you are advised to show this message to a trusted adult.

Circumstances where the contract tracing function can be paused

If an individual with the app tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), the app will ask them to allow those that they have been in contact with to be alerted. If so, the app will then alert relevant individuals if they have been in close contact with a positive case. 'Close contact' is based on an algorithm, but generally means you've been within 2 metres of someone for 15 minutes or more. Individuals are not informed who the positive case is.

It is possible to pause the contact tracing function ('trace') in the app. If paused, the phone and Bluetooth remain on but the phone does not record contacts. Pausing contact tracing is only recommended in specific situations:

- When an individual is not able to have their phone with them, for example because it is stored in a locker or communal area – this is to avoid the app picking up contacts when the individual is not with their phone
- When an individual is working behind a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, fully protected from other colleagues and members of the public, as the individual is considered to be adequately protected from contracting coronavirus (COVID-19)
- In a health or care setting where staff are wearing medical grade PPE (for example, a surgical mask) as these individuals are also considered to be adequately protected
- Are a healthcare worker working in a healthcare building such as a hospital or GP surgery (read more about using the app as a healthcare worker)

Remember to turn contact tracing back on once you leave this situation. When you pause contact tracing in the app it will give you the option to set a reminder to turn it back on after a certain period of time. Further information about how the app works is available on the NHS COVID-19 app support page, alongside frequently asked questions for younger users

When contact tracing is paused, you will still be able to check into venues with an official NHS QR code poster. Read more about the difference between contact tracing and venue check-in.

LAW ON SELF-ISOLATION FROM 28 SEPTEMBER 2020 (ENGLAND ONLY)

People will be required by law to self-isolate, supported by payment of £500 for those on lower incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-duty-to-self-isolate-comes-into-force-today

New fines for those breaching self-isolation rules will start at £1,000 – bringing this in line with the penalty for breaking quarantine after international travel - but could increase to up to £10,000 for repeat offences and for the most egregious breaches, including for those preventing others from self-isolating.

Obligation on the worker to *inform their* employer that they are self-isolating. It could be an offence if individuals breach self-isolation rules.

The New Regulations (England only). Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 [PDF].

Criteria for Payment

Individuals will receive this payment on top of any Statutory Sick Pay or benefits they receive. Currently individuals in employment who are self-isolating and cannot work from home are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they earn more than £120 a week from a single employer.

- Depending on their circumstances, they might also be able to claim Universal Credit and/or new style Employment and Support Allowance.
- The criteria for self-isolation payment is:
    - Have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they've tested positive or are the close contact of a positive case
    - are employed or self-employed
    - Unable to work from home and will lose income as a result
    - currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit