

From the Department of Health and Social Care:

Allocating tests over the next week

We have had an extraordinary number of first time orders for coronavirus test kits for homecare staff, and we would like to say a massive thank you for your efforts to protect staff, their families and the vulnerable people they care for.

Due to this exceptional high demand, we are initially prioritising the delivery of coronavirus test kits to areas in England where there is a high prevalence of the virus. This means agencies in areas of low prevalence will not receive kits as quickly.

We anticipate that these delays will be no more than 3 weeks and are making every effort to expedite this. This is due to our logistics network and is not an issue with our testing capacity. We are grateful for your patience.

'Number of residents' issue on the ordering portal

We are aware there is currently an anomaly on the ordering portal at the point where you are asked how many residents there are in your organisation.

Our guidance asks you to put in '0' at this point. However, the current system will not accept this, therefore please enter 1 to be able to proceed to the next stage while we work to fix this anomaly.

We recognise some may find this frustrating and apologise for any inconvenience caused. Please be assured that we are urgently working to resolve this issue and for future orders, please continue to write '0'.

Crossover with Extra Care and Supported Living

We are aware that some domiciliary carers are already accessing testing through the single round of testing for high risk extra care and supported living settings that meeting the following criteria:

- a closed community with substantial facilities shared between multiple people and
- where most residents receive the kind of personal care that is CQC regulated (rather than help with cooking, cleaning and shopping)

If your carers are already accessing testing through this route, they should continue to do so. There is no need for workers to test using both testing routes if they are eligible to do so, therefore:

- If you work in an Extra Care or Supported Living setting, you should test through the Extra Care or Supported Living testing route. This route provides testing for residents and staff. We will soon be moving to regular retesting as highlighted in the Covid-19 Winter Plan published on Monday. Further details about this will be provided in due course.
- If you work in wider domiciliary care, carers should use the weekly domiciliary retesting route that began on Monday 23rd November. Note that this route is not for testing care recipients, only for testing carers

Testing Contact Centre to provide additional support

If you have any questions related to testing, please call the Testing Contact Centre on 119 if you are in England, Wales and Northern Ireland or 0300 303 2713 if you are in Scotland.

When you call 119, please select the following options:

- select whether you're calling from England, Wales or Northern Ireland
- select your language requirement for the call
- select whether to hear what data is captured, or continue
- select 1 in response to the following question: "If you are calling because you have an upcoming hospital procedure, or from an organisation who receives test kits directly from the national testing programme, press 1".

This will get you straight through to the right team with minimal waiting times. Lines are open from 7am –11pm daily.

Who should you contact in an emergency?

Please remember that if, at any stage, someone at your organisation cannot cope with their symptoms, or their condition gets worse, or their symptoms do not get better after seven days, use the <https://111.nhs.uk/COVID-19> service or call NHS 111. In a medical emergency, dial 999.

Thank you,
NHS Test and Trace