



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

02 March 2021

Dear Responsible Individual,

You will have seen the Welsh Governments Coronavirus control plan: Alert levels in Wales for Social Care Services for Adults and Children, published on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales-for-social-care-services-for-adults-and-children.pdf>

In that document it stated that at alert level 4 the following interventions should be in place for children's care homes –

- Staff testing (weekly)
- All visits must be subject to effective social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and appropriate use of PPE.
- Indoor visiting to children's care homes not advised. Indoor visiting only advised in exceptional circumstances subject to testing with Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs)
- Testing for visiting professionals to care homes such as community health and social workers and inspectors is required (either through regular programme of testing or LFD testing at care home).
- Risk assessed outdoor visits can be supported.
- Visiting out in line with level 4 general guidance.

I am therefore writing to let you know that weekly PCR asymptomatic Covid-19 testing for staff working in care homes for children should be introduced (if not already in place) from the week commencing 1st March.

Additionally, LFD test kits will be made available during the same week to test **visitors and visiting professionals** to the care homes. Please note however that we are **not** introducing twice weekly LFD testing for children's care home staff at this stage.

Whilst testing can provide additional assurance it should be used alongside the existing range of infection and prevention control measures you are already using: PPE, physical distancing, hand hygiene and regular cleaning and to the process of individualised risk assessment relating to every child in your care. It is essential that all of these existing precautions are continued even once testing (and vaccination) are in place.

We hope that you will find the introduction of testing for your staff a positive step to safeguard your staff and those they care for. We hope the roll out will be as smooth as possible but inevitably we do expect some 'bumps' along the way and ask that you bear with us as we work hard to ensure a smooth and effective roll out for the children's care homes sector.

Yours Sincerely

NHS Track and Trace

Welsh Government

# **Frequently Asked Questions – Testing for Children’s Care Homes**

## **Who is the testing for?**

The testing set out in this document relates to the introduction of ***asymptomatic screening of staff and visitors/visiting professionals to children’s care homes***.

It is important to note that this testing is for adult staff and visitors only. We are not at this time introducing routine asymptomatic testing for children and young people living in a care home. For information on testing and infection prevention control in relation to children and young people please follow the link below to the Welsh Governments frequently asked questions.

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-health-and-social-care/faq-002-childrens-residential-care-homes-faqs/>

In the event of an incident or outbreak whole home testing may be required (for both staff, children and young people). In these incidents you will be advised about the correct course of action by local health protection teams.

Public Health Wales has also issued guidance to prevent Covid-19 among care home residents and manage cases, incidents and outbreaks in residential care settings in Wales <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-health-and-social-care/gui-001-covid-19-in-residential-care-settings/>

Anyone showing symptoms of Covid-19 should isolate and access a Covid-19 test via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

## **Who can’t I use the LFD testing for?**

**LFD tests must not be used for any other purpose than asymptomatic testing for visitors and visiting professionals.**

**You cannot use LFD test for children and young people living in the care home.** There is no change to testing policy for children and young people in care homes. In Wales they do not undergo regular asymptomatic testing but are tested if they are symptomatic or as part of whole home testing programmes within an outbreak management plan.

**You cannot use LFD testing to release staff who should be isolating** (due to TTP advice or being a confirmed ‘contact’) to return to work.

**LFD testing cannot be used to confirm a PCR test.** A positive PCR test in alert levels 3 and 4 should be considered a true positive and appropriate action taken. That initial positive result can be confirmed, particularly where a false positive is suspected, by another PCR test as a part of the whole home testing that will be triggered.

**LFD tests must not be used to test symptomatic staff or residents.**

**LFD tests cannot be used for testing staff member's family and friends**

**For further advice call NHS Test and Trace helpdesk**

You can call 119 to get support at any point throughout the testing journey. Support is available in up to 650 languages, including British Sign Language (BSL).

## **How do I get started?**

Welsh Government has provided basic details of your care home to the UK Government Department for Health and Social Care so that your care home can be added to the PCR and LFD test ordering portals. Both Welsh Government and Care Inspectorate Wales have received assurances in relation to the use and privacy of the data provided.

There are 2 types of test kits being delivered to care homes:

- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test kits
- Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits

**PCR test kits should be used to test asymptomatic staff members weekly.**

**LFD test kits should be used to test visitors and visiting professionals** (and any staff on their first day back to work following a period of leave that has resulted in someone missing their weekly PCR test. In this case staff should be tested before they begin their shift).

Both of these kits are throat and nose swab tests and will tell a person whether they had coronavirus at the time the test took place. They cannot tell a person if they have had coronavirus in the past.

## **How do I order test kits?**

You can [order test kits online](#). To place an order, you will need a Unique Organisation Number (UON). You should receive an email from DHSC with this number once your account has been approved.

You can also [look up your unique organisation reference number \(UON\)](#) using your unique reference number, or call the NHS Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.

**PCR tests**– you will be able to order x 2 PCR test kits for each staff member every 10 days

**LFD tests** - You will be able to order 200 LFD test kits per month. Within this order you will also be provided with a supply of 10 confirmatory PCR kits to be used in the event an individual receives a positive LFD result.

**Please only place an order if you require a replenishment of LFD or PCR test kits. There is no obligation to place an order if you have enough test kits already in your home.**

**Please also ensure you are registering your tests and results – failure to do so will result in you not being able to place more orders**

## **What training and support is available?**

### **Training and support for weekly PCR testing of staff**

Below are some guidance documents that provide more detail on how to prepare for, complete and submit your PCR tests.

- [guidance on PCR testing \(Wales\)](#)
- <https://youtu.be/zCqo7MhQT6U> - how to administer a self-swab

There will also be a live webinar held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March from 10am-11am - [https://event.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1438095&tp\\_key=7ab5b3a550](https://event.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1438095&tp_key=7ab5b3a550)

The webinar will be recorded, so if staff members are unable to attend, they will be able to access it afterwards at a time that is convenient for them.

The PCR guidance includes details of;

- How to book your courier collection
- How to register your test results

We recommend that members of staff register their own completed tests, using their personal email address and mobile number to receive their results directly. In some cases, the member of staff may prefer the home manager to register their test along with others completed in the home. If they both agree, the member of staff should provide their written consent.

### **Training and support for LFD testing for visitors and visiting professionals**

There is an NHS training portal which is available for all staff who will be involved in LFD testing. This must be completed and the short competency assessment must be passed before LFD testing starts.

Watching the training videos (described below) and reading the attached guidance describing 'how to self-test' will be sufficient for staff to become proficient in overseeing LFD visitor testing.

Visit the NHS training portal: <https://go.tessello.co.uk/TestDeviceTraining/> to set up an account or login.

When prompted enter the token: **3wkcVi4UTX**.

Once access is granted, all testing staff should watch the training videos before visitor testing commences.

You can also watch the video at the below link which will provide you with information on how to **undertake the swabbing**

[How to do a COVID-19 Self Test \(rapid antigen test\) - YouTube](#)

There will also be a live webinar held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March from 10am-11am - [https://event.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1438095&tp\\_key=7ab5b3a550](https://event.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1438095&tp_key=7ab5b3a550)

The webinar will be recorded, so if staff members are unable to attend, they will be able to access it afterwards at a time that is convenient for them.

Additional guidance on how to undertake LFD testing for visitors and visiting professionals in care homes is enclosed with this letter.

## **How do I register my LFD test kit?**

The results of all LFD tests **must** be registered (whether positive, indeterminate, negative or void) at:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>

We are monitoring compliance and so it is important that visitors register all results.

Registering and logging results should be done within **24 hours** of taking a test. This is to ensure that results can assist NHS Test and Trace in understanding transmission and prevalence.

Registering results is vitally important for two key reasons;

- 1 - Results link directly through to the Test, Trace, Protect service which will ensure that contacts are traced as quickly as possible to prevent further ongoing transmission
- 2 - A failure to register kits may mean that you will be unable to order more when needed

[Creating a user account for LFD tests](#)

Visitors will be able to create a user account when self-registering their LFD result. This will save a significant amount of time during the registration of their LFD result, as their details will be saved; removing the need to enter in personal details each time an LFD result is registered. Please note all details will need to be entered when creating the account. Once the account is created, the amount of time taken to register will decrease.

Visitors will be required to input an email address and phone number, as part of the account creation and verification process.

Please note, if visitors do not want to create an account, the single registration journey is still available.

## **How do I interpret test results?**

### ***A negative result***

If a member of staff or a visitor has a negative test then they are able to enter the care home and continue working or visiting the care home resident. However it is vital that staff and visitors recognise that a negative test result is not a guarantee that they cannot transmit the virus and so effective infection prevention and control measures including hand hygiene, social distancing and PPE will remain of the utmost importance.

### ***A positive result***

In the event of a positive result, the individual staff member or visitor should immediately self isolate and follow their local organisational protocol for reporting a positive test result. Everyone in their household or support bubble must also isolate for 10 days from the day after the individual tested positive. Further guidance on how to self-isolate can be found here <https://gov.wales/self-isolation>

For any **positive LFD result** an urgent confirmatory RT PCR test should be taken, with swabs taken in accordance with your organisational protocols and sent to their local designated COVID-19 laboratory for testing.

Until the result is confirmed the individual should continue to self-isolate in line with Government guidelines.

If you become aware that anyone who has recently visited your setting has tested positive, your manager should contact your Public Health Wales health protection team - [Public Health Wales Health Protection Division - Health Protection Team](#)

### ***Invalid LFD result***

If the test indicates an invalid result (see below) the staff member or visitor will need to repeat the test with a new test kit.

The Welsh Government and Public Health Wales do not advise repeat testing for **90 days** after a previously positive result, unless new COVID-19 symptoms develop. In some cases people have continued to test positive for many weeks after initially testing positive for the virus because small fragments of the virus can stay in the nose and throat for several weeks after infection. However these individuals are no longer infectious to others. Therefore repeat testing could lead to unnecessary time off work due to a further period of self-isolation.

## **How do I go about testing visitors and visiting professionals?**

### ***Family and friend visitors***

Any visits to your care home from families and friends should be in line with the Welsh Governments Control Plan: Alert Levels for social care and our visiting guidance:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales-for-social-care-services-for-adults-and-children.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/visits-care-homes-guidance>

Visitors should be prepared in advance for both the visiting and the testing. Enclosed with this letter is a guidance document for you to send to any care home family or friend visitors.

### ***Visiting Professionals***

You should ask visiting professionals if they are already part of an asymptomatic testing programme and if so when they were last tested. We are rolling out asymptomatic testing for health and social care staff and over time all or most of the visiting professionals to your home will be part of a testing programme and will not need to be tested at the care home.

**Please note that visiting professionals do not need to be tested every day or every time they enter the care home.** They will be tested twice a week. If they arrive at your care home with evidence (usually a letter from their employer or with a text message on their phone from the results portal) that they are already part of a regular testing programme and have already completed an LFD test in the past 4 days they will not need to undertake another LFD test. You can allow them to enter the care home with usual infection prevention and control measures.

However if visiting professionals have not yet been added to a regular testing programme they will expect to be asked to undertake a test before they enter. Please be mindful that any down time whilst awaiting a test result is impacting on the professionals working day and as such we have asked visiting professionals to try and give you advance notice if they are visiting and will need a test so that the care home can be ready to test as swiftly as possible.

## **What do I do for people who are symptomatic?**

As with any member of the public showing coronavirus symptoms, staff and children living in care homes can access a Covid-19 test on line <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119. It is important that PCR test kits through appropriate channels are used for people who are symptomatic.

Further guidance on how to get a test can be found at <https://gov.wales/getting-tested-coronavirus-covid-19>