

## Procedures for Covid-19 Testing for Community Pharmacy Staff and their household contacts

The Department of Health has approved COVID-19 testing for Primary Care healthcare workers (HCWs) and their household contacts to help facilitate HCWs returning to the workplace. This includes community pharmacy frontline staff. There are **three options** available for COVID-19 testing for community pharmacy staff or their household contacts displaying symptoms and therefore requiring staff to self-isolate:

1. **By contacting the GP practice of the person with symptoms**
2. **By booking an appointment for one of the following test centres:**
  - SSE Arena, Odyssey Car park, Belfast BT3 9QQ
  - City of Derry Rugby Club, Judges Rd, Londonderry, BT47 6LN
  - Craigavon MOT centre, Craigavon, BT63 5RY
3. **By requesting a home postal test kit (numbers limited).**

### Background and Context to Testing

#### (i) Testing Health Care Workers (HCWs): Interim Criteria

- The earlier the test is done following the onset of symptoms, the more reliable the result.
- Testing of HCWs is normally of greatest benefit during days 1 to 5 of symptoms.
- Testing of HCWs who would normally be expected to return to work within 72 hours may not be considered a priority.
- Children under 5 years of age will not normally be tested due to problems with their levels of cooperation with the testing process.

#### (ii) Who should be tested?

- If you are self-isolating because you are displaying COVID 19 symptoms then **you** are eligible to be tested.
- If you are self-isolating because someone in your household is displaying COVID 19 symptoms, then **they** are eligible to be tested - not you
- If you are self-isolating but neither a member of your household or you are displaying symptoms then you are not eligible for a test.

Note: Common COVID 19 symptoms include:

- new continuous cough
- high temperature >37.8°C

**(iii) How do I arrange testing?****Option 1: Contact the GP practice of the person with symptoms**

- Testing can be requested by contacting the GP of the symptomatic patient in the usual way and explaining that the patient is eligible for COVID-19 testing.
- Following authorisation of the test by the GP, the relevant Trust carrying out the test will contact the patient to arrange an appointment for the test and advise where and when this will take place.
- Test results will be returned to the authorising GP who will share with the patient
- Outside GP working hours, testing is available through Out of Hours centres.

**OR****Option 2: Book an appointment at one of the three drive-through test sites\*: Belfast SSE Arena, City of Derry Rugby Club or Craigavon MOT centre**

- If you are eligible for a test, you should book a test via the online portal at: <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>
- Once you have booked your appointment, you will receive an email confirming the appointment and a QR code which you must bring to the test. You will need to scan the QR code to gain entry to the test site.
- You or a member of your household must drive to the test site. Tests cannot be carried out on people who arrive on foot, take public transport or a taxi.
- Test sites are usually open between 10 and 4pm daily, 7 days a week.

**OR****Option 3: By requesting a home postal test kit\* (numbers limited).** This may be suitable for non-drivers.

- If you are eligible for a test, you should request a test via the online portal at: <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>  
Note: Additional checks are carried out before a home test kit can be sent out, e.g. check of work contact details.
- The home test kit is posted to the address provided.
- The kit includes instructions for performing and returning the test

\*This is a self-administered swab test and is unsuitable for under-fives. A parent or guardian must perform the test on 5-11-year olds.

Refer to <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-covid-19> for further details including:

- Instructions for visiting a test site
- How home testing works
- Advice on test results.