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GUIDANCE

Coronavirus Covid-19 testing process

How symptomatic critical workers are tested for coronavirus testing, as part of our phased approach.

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Introduction

Our approach is to test all symptomatic critical workers as quickly as possible and to manage capacity and demand.

To ensure essential core services continue, testing is prioritised for:

- health and social care workers
- police
- fire service
- prison workers

One symptomatic household member of a critical worker can also be tested, so that if the test is negative the critical worker is able to return to work.

The objective is to increase and improve Wales' testing programme for all groups of critical workers as soon as possible, to provide greater reach and flexibility.

The phased introduction of the new web-based booking system to access mass drive-through testing centres, the introduction of home testing and mobile swab units form part of this strategy.

The Welsh Government [critical workers policy](https://gov.wales/key-critical-workers-testing-policy-coronavirus-covid-19) (<https://gov.wales/key-critical-workers-testing-policy-coronavirus-covid-19>) details broad categories of critical workers, enabling a level of discretion to be exercised so that all symptomatic critical workers who need a test in these groups can get tested.

Public Health Wales is working with local health boards and local authorities to identify major employers amongst the initial priority groups of critical workers. These employers will be contacted and asked to identify critical workers who need to be prioritised for testing.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for a test you must be a critical worker or a symptomatic household member of a critical worker showing the following symptoms:

- a high temperature 38°C or above

- a persistent cough or shortness of breath

To ensure essential core services continue, testing is prioritised for:

- health and social care workers
- police
- fire service
- prison workers

Referral process and booking a test

For Health and Social Care Workers Across Wales

Health care workers are referred for testing via their local Health Boards or Trusts. Referrals for social care workers are coordinated via the Local Authorities or Local Resilience Forums (LRFs).

For employers in south east Wales

A new web-based booking system will be available for a priority list of key employers to refer critical workers (or a symptomatic household member of a critical worker who is not showing symptoms) for a test. These key employers include police, fire service and prison workers.

This new system will include an eligibility checking process. Employers currently being prioritised through the process have been contacted by Public Health Wales to supply a database of critical workers.

When the symptomatic workers are referred to the website to book a test, the website will check the individual's details against the database of critical workers. If the individual is on the database they will be asked to use a symptom checker. If they have symptoms consistent with COVID infection, they will be offered a test.

There are 2 drive-through centres:

- **Cardiff City Stadium** (operated by Public Health Wales) For more information email: PHW.Covid19KeyworkerSampling@wales.nhs.uk

<mailto:PHW.Covid19KeyworkerSampling@wales.nhs.uk>

- **Rodney Parade Stadium, Newport** (operated by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) For more information email: LRFtestingunit.abb@wales.nhs.uk
(<mailto:LRFtestingunit.abb@wales.nhs.uk>)

For employees in south east Wales

You should check with your employer (through your occupational health department) whether your organisation is already included as part of the new web-based booking system.

If your organisation is registered and you are displaying symptoms, your employer will provide you with full guidance on how to access the web-based booking system. The process is as follows:

- You will be sent a link to the web-based booking system
- You will be asked to enter key details, including your National Insurance number
- If your details match the system database (which they should be if your employer has confirmed your organisation is registered) then you will be asked to complete a set of questions on your symptoms
- You will be offered a testing slot at a mass testing drive-through centre at either Cardiff City Stadium or Rodney Parade Stadium, Newport

If you are booking a test for a symptomatic household member, your employer will be able to provide you with further guidance.

For employers in other areas of Wales

The system used in south east Wales will soon be expanded to include a range of employers across Wales. Until then, the manual referral processes will continue.

In **north Wales** critical workers can be referred by their employers for testing at the new mass drive-through testing centre at Llandudno by contacting the Betsi Cadwaldr University Health Board (BCUHB). NWLRF.Covid19StaffTesting@wales.nhs.uk
(<mailto:NWLRF.Covid19StaffTesting@wales.nhs.uk>)

In **south west Wales**, critical workers can be referred by their employers for testing at the mass drive-through testing centre in Carmarthen by telephoning the Hywel Dda

University Health Board (HDUHB) on 0300 303 8322 (callers will receive a call back).

We are currently looking at how testing capacity can be further strengthened in Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys.

For employers who operate across Wales, the advice is for the local/regional offices to coordinate the list of individuals to be tested through the local referral arrangement.

For employees in other areas of Wales

You should check with your employer (through your occupational health department) for guidance on the local referral arrangements in place.

About the test

Taking the test

The antigen (virus) test looks for the presence of the virus. Tests are most effective when used early, in the first 3 days of showing symptoms.

The test involves taking a single dry swab from the back of the throat.

Processing the test

Tests in Wales are processed at Public Health Wales laboratories.

Reliability of test is dependent on swab taken from around the tonsils. Clear instructions are vital for the practitioner or individual conducting the tests.

About the test results

The results

The result of a test will be sent via text message to the individual who has been tested. Their employer will receive an email confirming that the test result has been sent.

When the results of household members are provided, the information provided to employers is redacted to state that the result has been given to the individual but not state details of the result (positive or negative).

A positive result

If you receive a positive test result, you and your whole household must self-isolate at home in line with the [self-isolation guidance](https://gov.wales/stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus) (<https://gov.wales/stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>).

A negative result

If you receive a negative result and you are a critical worker who works with vulnerable people you should not return to work until symptoms such as fever have resolved.

If a household member's test comes back negative you can return to work, but must self-isolate straight away if you develop symptoms.

If you test negative and then later develop symptoms, your employer can refer you to be tested again.

Data uploaded to electronic patient records

Every day, all test data will be sent by NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) to SAIL (the databank assisting the government and NHS in tackling the pandemic) to enable SAIL to gather and analyse anonymised data to support large scale analysis of the spread of the disease.

First published

29 April 2020

Last updated

29 April 2020

