



5 June 2020

To: DPHs and DASSs  
CC: Chief Execs, Local NHS and Care Providers

## **ROLL OUT OF WHOLE CARE HOME TESTING – EXTENSION OF ELIGIBILITY**

I wrote to you on the 13 May 2020 about the roll out of whole care home testing and the launch of the Care Home Testing digital portal. This followed the Minister of State for Care's letter of 7 May setting out the steps we were taking to meet our commitment of offering a coronavirus test to every staff member and resident in every care home in England, whether symptomatic or not.

In my letter of 13 May, I set out how this service would be rolled out to all care homes in a phased approach; initially to care homes whose primary clients are older people or those with dementia but that we would look to roll this service out to other types of adult social care settings. Since its launch we have been able to provide 919,321 kits to care homes in England test kits to care homes, and we are now able send out over 50,000 test kits a day. I would like to thank you and your teams for all that you have done to support whole care home testing so far and I want to acknowledge the tremendous amount of work that has been undertaken to get to this stage.

### *Extension of eligibility*

We have listened to the sector about the importance of also reaching other types of adult care home setting as quickly as possible. I am therefore pleased to announce that from 7 June 2020 all remaining adult care homes will be able to access whole care home testing for all residents and asymptomatic staff through the digital portal, as we expand eligibility to them. We expect these to be adult care homes catering for adults with learning disabilities or mental health issues, physical disabilities, acquired brain injuries and other categories for younger adults under 65 years.

We are continuing to explore how we can support other parts of the sector such as those in supported living settings, extra care settings and domiciliary care. Anyone with suspected coronavirus symptoms in these settings can of course access testing by self-refer on [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Many stakeholders have called for retesting in care homes and other adult social care settings. We have commissioned SAGE guidance on this, and I will update you shortly on the plans for retesting.

## *Start Registration Now*

To be able to start fulfilling requests from remaining care homes from the 7 June 2020.

**We are opening up the digital portal from 4pm today** so that the remaining care homes can **register** to receive their test kits. The digital portal can be accessed here <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>

As we move into this next phase I would like to take the opportunity to clarify how we schedule delivery of test kits to care homes. I am setting this out so that you can help explain the process and manage the expectations of individual care homes, who we understand will want to receive testing kits as soon as possible.

- By registering on the portal, care homes tell us that they would like to carry out whole care home testing and that they want to be sent test kits.
- The order in which we send out testing kits is not on a first come first served basis. We will continue to prioritise sending test kits to:
  - 1) care homes referred to us by PHE because they have had a new outbreak,
  - 2) then care homes that have over 50 beds, then those with 25-50 beds
  - 3) and then all other care homes.

Given our increased daily testing capacity we are confident that we will be able to get to all additional care homes over the next few weeks.

- We will also ask local directors of public health to tell us which care homes to prioritise in this next phase.

I have attached to this letter an updated factsheet which sets out again in more detail the process of accessing test kits through the digital portal as we have refined some of processes since we launched on the 11 May 2020. It also sets out how Directors of Public Health can tell us which care homes to prioritise in this next phase

It is a significant milestone that we are able to now roll out whole care home testing to all adult care homes. Our testing programme protects and keeps people safe. Whole care home testing is a crucial part of this. It helps prevent and control outbreaks and means steps can be taken to reduce the spread of the virus.

## **Support to care homes in the next phase**

- **Guidance and Videos** Recognising the specific needs of people who access care in the care homes we will be reaching in this next phase we have developed specific guidance on how to carry out the swabbing. You can find this guidance here [insert link] This includes a video demonstrating how to carry out testing when a person has learning disabilities and a video to help explain the testing process to the person being tested.

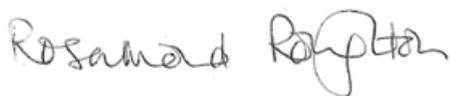
- **Training and NHS Clinical Leads** As part of our care home support package NHSE/I have offered training to every care home, and every care home should now have a named clinical lead.
- **Whole Care Home Testing Webinars** To support care home planning to carry out whole care home testing, we are hosting webinars every morning on the whole home testing process. We strongly recommend them for care homes carry out testing so that they can understand the process and what they need to do. Care Homes can register to access the webinar:  
<https://event.on24.com/wcc/r/2375949/724EF6345473A192F6B9C19334699A29/1077953>.

While we will be reaching out to the now eligible care homes directly, you continue to play a crucial role. First, we would like your help again to make sure that eligible care homes are aware of and understand how they can access the testing programme through the digital portal. Second, we need you to continue to use your local arrangements and excellent support mechanisms to support care homes prepare for testing and as they receive the results of those tests.

To support you, we will continue to share management information on a regular basis with Directors of Public Health and Regional NHS testing leads about which care homes have scheduled deliveries throughout this next phase of whole care home testing.

If you have questions about a registration, delivery or collection you can contact the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre on 0300 303 2713. It is open from 07:00 to 23:00 every day.

Yours sincerely,



Rosamond Roughton  
**Director General, Adult Social Care**