



EXPANSION OF COVID-19 TESTING

The Scottish Government is committed to Coronavirus testing for key workers or their family members to allow them to get back to work as soon as it is safe to do so. We are working with UK Government to extend testing to a wide range of key workers and are writing to inform you of an expansion of the UK Government Testing Programme for priority key workers in Scotland.

This programme operates separately from the existing NHS testing programme in Scotland, which supports testing for clinical purposes and priority staff in the NHS and social care sector.

The Scottish Government has now issued a prioritisation matrix which explains which key workers should be able to access testing through the UK Government Testing Programme. This guidance provides more information on who those key workers are and how you can assist them in accessing testing.

In summary, a new online portal has been established where employers can register and refer self-isolating staff or members of their household. The aim is to make the process of getting an appointment as simple as possible. In addition to this employer led testing, it is also possible for individuals to book tests online themselves.

As this is a UK Government run programme if you need technical assistance please contact DHSC at opshub@dhsc.gov.uk. Employees who have been referred for a test can seek assistance from the Coronavirus Testing Helpdesk on 0300 303 2713 for any technical issues related to their booking.

As you will be aware from media reporting these services are experiencing very high levels of demand, which is being carefully monitored by DHSC.

We are working closely with the UK Government to respond to the Coronavirus outbreak and testing is an important part of that. We are grateful for the assistance of businesses in helping ensure that key workers are able to access testing.

GUIDANCE ON THE UK GOVERNMENT TESTING PROGRAMME IN SCOTLAND

Overview

The UK Government Testing Programme is establishing a range of additional testing capacity, including through a number of drive thru testing centres in Scotland. This capacity will continue to expand to provide additional options for testing, including through home delivery.

To date tests have primarily been available to health and social care workers and emergency services. The UK Government has already announced a significant expansion of the categories of key worker eligible for testing in England and the Scottish Government has now reviewed arrangements and determined the further priority key workers who may now access testing through this UK programme.

Key workers in the NHS and care sector will remain the top priority for testing in Scotland. They will continue to primarily access tests through existing NHS testing capacity.

This guidance sets out who can access the UK Government Testing Programme in Scotland and how they can do so.

Who can access testing?

The Scottish Government has set out a prioritisation matrix for identifying which key workers should be able to access testing in Scotland. This divides key workers into four groups.

- **Priority Group 1:** Health and social care workers; staff working in residential institutions and essential roles where service resilience is at risk.
- **Priority Group 2:** Essential workers in critical national infrastructure fundamental for safety and security, and life-line services.
- **Priority Group 3:** Staff directly involved in delivering other essential services.
- **Priority Group 4:** Staff involved in volunteering, or in nationally or locally significant industry important to economic sustainability and growth.

In the Annex to this guidance is more detail on these Priority Groups along with examples of relevant key worker populations within each category. Please note the list is not exhaustive but intended to provide an indication of the type of worker within each Group.

Testing continues to be prioritised for Health and Social Care workers with the aim of ensuring these critical staff can return to work as soon as it is safe to do so.

- The UK Government drive thru testing facilities are for key workers who are self-isolating because they are symptomatic, or household members over 5 years of age who are symptomatic.
- The UK Government drive thru testing is only for people within a 90 minute drive of the location. Workers will also have to be able to maintain strict isolation measures during this commute.

Additional testing capacity will also be put in place in the period ahead, including through a number of mobile testing sites and home delivery.

NHS Scotland Testing

Those who are in Priority Group 1 should continue to access testing through the NHS in Scotland. The only exceptions to this are health and social care workers who are self employed – such as personal care assistants. These workers should access testing through the UK Testing Programme **employee** portal route described below.

Where those in the other Priority Groups are able to access NHS testing already they should continue to do so. However, if there are times when NHS testing capacity is at its maximum, then full use should be made of the testing opportunities offered by the UK Government Programme.

Further information about the NHS testing programme in Scotland can be found here <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>



UK Testing Programme

At present drive thru testing is available at: Glasgow Airport, Edinburgh Airport, Aberdeen Airport and Inverness Highland and Islands University Campus. In addition there is some capacity to allow individual key workers to order a home-test kit. In addition, new testing routes are being developed, and this is likely to include a number of smaller sites and mobile testing units.

How do you access the UK Testing Programme?

There are 2 routes for accessing the UK Testing Programme:

- (i) **the employer portal** – this is for employers who wish to assist their employees with registration.
- (ii) **the employee portal** – this allows individual key workers to book a test directly themselves.

These portals are experiencing very high volumes of demand and you may experience delays in being able to access them at peak periods of demand. Demand is being monitored very closely and technical difficulties being addressed as quickly as possible.

(i) **the employer portal**

For employers wishing to assist their employees with registration, the first step is to email portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk for access to the portal. Please include your organisation name and sector, as well as the name and email address of up to two people who will use the portal. Further guidance is available from the UK Government at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#arrange-a-test>

(ii) **the employee portal**

Employees wishing to book a test directly should go to <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/> You can get an appointment at one of the drive thru testing centres if you are a key worker **and** you or a member of your family is symptomatic.

You may be able to request a home testing kit. This service is experiencing very high demand and there may be temporary limitations on the number of testing kits available on a daily basis. The home test kits will be delivered by Amazon and sent directly to your home so you can perform the test yourself. The test will then be collected by Royal Mail couriers



Annex

Scottish Government's Prioritisation Matrix

PRIORITY MATRIX FOR KEY WORKERS TO BE TESTED DURING LOCKDOWN PHASE OF COVID 19 RESPONSE

Priority number	Rationale for prioritisation	Relevant keyworker populations
<i>Priority Group 1: Health and social care workers; and staff working in residential institutions and essential roles where service resilience is at risk.</i>		
1A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff delivering NHS services. 2. Staff providing social care to protect and care for the most vulnerable. <p><i>Currently routed through Health Boards</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All NHS staff and independent contractors working for the NHS, including community pharmacy and emergency dental care. • All social care and social work staff working with vulnerable people and the social care system, including care homes, care at home and children's services (including residential and secure care for children), and social care personal assistants <p><i>(note key workers in these groups who are not employed through an organisation will access testing, where this can support a return to work, through the UK Government schemes)</i></p>
1B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff with face-to-face roles in residential institutions with people in the care of the state. 2. Staff are working essential services with niche roles, where service resilience is at risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational staff in prisons • All other carers working with looked after children not already included in 1A • Staff working on critical national infrastructure (e.g. energy supply) with niche skills essential to maintain services safely • Defence staff living in Scotland who fall within the MOD's very highest priority category for testing.
<i>Priority Group 2: Essential workers in critical national infrastructure fundamental for safety and security, and life-line services.</i>		
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff directly involved in maintaining public safety and security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Scottish Fire and Rescue Service • Local authorities staff working public safety, security or law and order



	2. Staff essential to the delivery of critical services to the public including supply chains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Front-line Home Office Staff, including: a) those running immigration detention centres, b) Maritime Border Force, c) frontline immigration and customs officers• Essential defence personnel• Essential environmental protection• Essential animal health and welfare• Funeral industry• Staff working for third sector organisations supporting people and children who are vulnerable, including grant aided schools
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essential roles within food supply chain and food processing.• Essential roles within medicines and pharmaceutical supply.• Essential roles in chemicals supply chains• Essential roles in energy and water supply
Priority Group 3: Staff directly involved in delivering other essential services.		
3	Staff delivering essential services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff providing child care/education in schools for key workers• Public transport workers• Postal services• Financial services• Supermarket workers• Construction and maintenance of essential public services• Court and Crown Office staff• Civil Servants, parliament staff and other critical decision makers in public sector working on the central response to covid-19• Journalists
Priority Group 4: Staff involved in volunteering, or in nationally or locally significant industry important to economic sustainability and growth		
4	Staff involved in volunteering to provide support to vulnerable people and communities; and staff involved in national or local industry important to economic sustainability and growth.	



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