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Guidance

COVID-19: how hospital-based healthcare workers can arrange laboratory testing for patients

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-guidance-for-clinical-diagnostic-laboratories/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-who-to-call-to-request-laboratory-testing>

Latest updates to this guidance

26 April: clarification that this guidance refers to how hospital-based healthcare workers can arrange laboratory testing for patients and inclusion of a link to essential workers testing guidance.

Purpose and scope

The following information is intended for hospital-based healthcare professionals seeking testing for patients.

If you are an essential worker seeking a test for yourself or a household member with symptoms this guidance does not apply to you (and the laboratories below will not be able to help you) please go to our guidance for essential workers (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#arrange-a-test>).

Requests for laboratory testing of possible cases must meet the criteria for a possible case (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-initial-investigation-of-possible-cases/investigation-and-initial-clinical-management-of-possible-cases-of-wuhan-novel-coronavirus-wn-cov-infection#interim-definition-possible-cases>) of [COVID-19](#).

Designated Public Health England (PHE) regional laboratories, the Reference Laboratory at PHE Colindale and many NHS Trust laboratories are able to test samples for SARS-CoV-2.

For hospitals without local testing, send samples to the listed PHE regional laboratory designated for the referring laboratory region. It is not necessary to telephone the laboratory or health protection team (HPT) to request testing.

For [COVID-19](#) testing, please contact your nearest Microbiology testing Laboratory. PHE Regional testing laboratories are outlined below.

Note: Members of the public should access their laboratory results via their local healthcare provider. PHE does not issue results directly to patients, only to health professionals.

PHE designated laboratories per region for testing (telephone numbers provided for health professional queries only: please see separate guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#arrange-a-test>) if you are an essential worker seeking a test for yourself or a household member with symptoms)

NHS Region	Designated laboratory	Address for sample dispatch	Contact telephone numbers	
			Normal hours	Out of hours
East of England	Cambridge PHL	Public Health England, Public Health Laboratory, Box 236, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Cambridge Biomedical Campus Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ	01223 257037	01223 245151 Ask for on call Virologist
London	Respiratory virus unit, Colindale	Respiratory virus unit (RVU), Public Health England, 61 Colindale Avenue, London, NW9 5EQ	0208 327 7887	020 8200 4400 Ask for Duty Doctor
Midlands	Birmingham PHL	Public Health Laboratory Birmingham, Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, Bordesley Green East, Birmingham, B9 5SS	0121 424 3111	0121 4242000 Ask for duty virologist

NHS Region	Designated laboratory	Address for sample dispatch	Contact telephone numbers	
North East	Newcastle lab	Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory, Microbiology and Virology Department, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7DN	0191 233 6161 (Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, switchboard) Ask for Consultant Virologist	0191 233 6161 (Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, switchboard) Ask for on-call Consultant Virologist
North West	Manchester PHL	Virology Reception, Third Floor, Clinical Science Building 1, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WL	0161 276 8853	0161 276 1234 Ask for on-call Microbiologist
South East	Southampton lab	Microbiology, Level B, South Laboratory Block, Southampton General Hospital, Tremona Road, Southampton SO16 6YD	023 8120 6408	023 8077 7222 Ask for out of hours Microbiology biomedical scientist
South West	Bristol PHL	<u>PHE</u> Microbiology, Public Health England, Pathology Sciences Building, Westbury, Bristol, BS10 5NB	0117 414 6222	0117 950 5050 Ask for on-call Virologist or Microbiologist
Yorkshire and Humber	Leeds lab	Virology Department, Old Medical School, Leeds General Infirmary, Thoresby Place, Leeds LS1 3EX	0113 392 8750 (option 2) (Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, switchboard) Ask for on-call Consultant Virologist	0113 243 2799 or 0113 243 3144 (Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, switchboard) Ask for on-call Consultant Virologist