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His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh

10 June 1921 to 9 April 2021

Read about the arrangements following The Duke of Edinburgh's death (https://www.gov.uk/duke-of-edinburgh)

1. Home (https://www.gov.uk/)
2. Coronavirus (COVID-19) (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon)
3. Healthcare workers, carers and care settings during coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/healthcare-workers-carers-and-care-settings)

Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for personal assistants

How personal assistants working in adult social care in England can access twice-weekly COVID-19 testing.

From:
> Department of Health and Social Care (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care)

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Introduction

Personal assistants working in adult social care who provide care that requires them to come within 2 metres of an adult over the age of 18 who they support will be eligible for testing. For testing purposes, a 'personal assistant' is someone who is directly employed by an individual (or self-employed) to provide

care and support to enable them to live as independently as possible. This care could include support in the home, or to go out into the community.

Personal assistants will be responsible for ordering test kits every 21 days or an employee can order test kits on their behalf.

Webinars

For more information you can join our webinars. These live webinars will:

- talk you through the end to end process for personal assistant testing
- include a live Q&A with the personal assistant team, who will be happy to answer your questions

Sign up for the webinars (https://event.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1433378&tp_key=cc65e8ae2d)

Testing for personal assistants

Summary of testing

- Personal assistants should order a box of 7 lateral flow tests (LFTs) every 21 days for themselves, or an employer can order test kits on their behalf.
- Seven tests are delivered for each personal assistant to their selected delivery address for a 21 day testing cycle.
- A personal assistant should take a test twice a week and register them online. All results must be registered whether negative, positive or void
- Personal assistants will receive their results within 30 minutes of conducting the test.
- If a personal assistant receives a positive LFT result they should order and conduct a confirmatory polymarase chain reaction (PCR) test (https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) immediately, isolate until they receive a result, and notify their employer.
- Personal assistants should repeat LFT testing cycling twice each week.

> If you have any queries with any of the steps please call the national coronavirus contact centre on 119.

Why testing is important

Testing:

- identifies personal assistants who currently have COVID-19 so they are able to self-isolate if positive
- protects those receiving care from infection passed to them by personal assistants who are confirmed positive
- prevents and controls the spread of the virus by identifying asymptomatic cases

Eligibility

You're eligible as a personal assistant if:

- you're directly employed by an individual (or self-employed) to provide care and support to enable them to live as independently as possible
- the care you provide requires you to come within 2 metres of an adult over the age of 18 that you support

If you believe you match these criteria, follow the guidance below on ordering test kits, sign up for the webinars and call 119 for any assistance.

If you're not eligible right now

We're working hard to increase our testing capacity, develop new technologies and reach more people.

Your involvement: personal assistants

If you are a 'personal assistant' (for testing purposes, defined as someone who is directly employed by an individual (or self-employed) to provide care and support to enable them to live as independently as possible), your key responsibilities are to:

- attend a webinar to understand the process
- order 1 box of 7 LFT kits for yourself every 21 days
- conduct 2 LFTs each week
- register your tests as soon as you have completed them each week
- if you receive a positive LFT result:
  - immediately order and conduct a confirmatory PCR test
  - isolate until you receive your PCR result
  - notify your employer
- if your PCR result is positive:
  - continue to isolate following government guidance
  - notify your employer and provide contacts to NHS Test and Trace. After testing positive, do not take an LFT or PCR test again for 90 days unless you become symptomatic
- once you have received your result, dispose of your LFT in a general waste bin
- regardless of your result, continue following all infection prevention and control measures such as wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), washing your hands and socially distancing where possible, even if you or the people you care for have had the vaccine

End-to-end process: personal assistants

Ordering test kits

Personal assistants or the individual employer are responsible for ordering test kits (https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests).

Personal assistants or the individual employer on their behalf must order one box of 7 LFT test kits.

Personal assistants or the individual employer ordering on the personal assistant's behalf must decide the address their test kits are delivered to. Boxes of 7 LFT kits will fit your letterbox.

Once you have placed an order, you will receive a confirmatory email from the following email address: organisation.coronavirus.testing@notifications.service.gov.uk

If you have any issues with any of the steps test kits, please call the national coronavirus contact centre on 119.

Delivery and preparation

Boxes of 7 LFT kits will fit through your letterbox. Test kits are typically delivered within 48 hours.

Before testing be sure to:

- read this guidance ('Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for personal assistants')
- read guidance included with your test kit
- watch the video on How to do a COVID-19 Self Test

How to do a COVID-19 Self Test (rapid antigen test) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=S9XR8RZxKNo&list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYlVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ)

Using the test kits

Personal assistants will conduct a combined throat and nose self-swab for the test. See the instructional video above on How to do a COVID-19 Self Test.

If possible, please continue testing while on holiday (in the UK) or off work due to an illness not related to coronavirus.

After testing positive, you do not need to test again for 90 days unless you become symptomatic.

Reading your result

If personal assistant receives a negative result with an LFT result and remain without symptoms they can continue working. Personal assistants must continue following all IPC measures such as wearing PPE, washing your hands and socially distancing where possible.

If any personal assistant tests positive, they will need to order a confirmatory PCR test (https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) and immediately self-isolate until they receive their PCR result.

If the confirmatory PCR comes back as negative that person can come back to work as long as they do not have symptoms.

If the confirmatory PCR comes back as positive, their household and contacts will need to isolate in line with current guidance. The personal assistant should discontinue regular rapid LFT and PCR testing for 90 days. If a personal assistant receives an invalid or void result they should immediately conduct another rapid LFT.

Registering test kits

All test results must be registered online whether they are positive, negative or void. Personal assistants need to use this service every time they complete a self-test.

To register a test kit:

1. Go to Report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result (https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result)
2. Select who you are reporting the result for, either 'Myself' or 'Someone else'
3. Create an account, you will only have to do this once and it will remember your personal details for when you have to register test results each time
4. Select 'None of the above' when asked who was the test for
5. Select the date you'll take the coronavirus test. If you've already taken the coronavirus test, tell us the data and time you took it
6. Enter or scan your test ID number. You will find the ID number under the QR code on the LFT
7. Enter personal details:
   - name
   - date of birth
8. Enter your contact details:
   - email address
   - mobile number
9. Select the result of the test whether that be 'positive', 'negative' or 'invalid'
10. Check your answers
11. Receive confirmation of registration via email

If personal assistants cannot register test kits online, they can either:

- call 119 and select option 1
- have someone else register on their behalf (provided they have written consent to do so and can obtain personal details required to complete the form)

Twice-weekly retesting

After you have completed your first round of testing, you should continue to test using LFTs twice a week on the same days each week. If you have tested positive, you do not need to retest for 90 days unless you become symptomatic.

- day 1: conduct test on day of planned testing, receive result and register test
- day 3 to 5: conduct test on day of planned testing, receive result and register test
- repeat testing process every 7 days

If you receive a positive test result, please stay or return home and inform your line manager.

Operational support for personal assistants

If a personal assistant tests positive or is instructed to isolate, their individual employer or somebody on their behalf should try to organise different arrangements. This is why contingency plans for the individual employers are so important (see guidance on developing a contingency plan

(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget#plan)). For example, it may be that another PA is willing and able to take on further work to provide the individual with the care and support they need.

In cases where arrangements cannot be put in place to provide the individual employers with the care and support they need, the PA or somebody on their behalf should contact the local authority or clinical commissioning group immediately. They will support the individual employer in developing a temporary plan to ensure individuals' needs are met, while you are self-isolating.

PAs are entitled to claim free PPE from their local authority or local resilience forum (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-local-contacts-for-care-providers).

Financial support for personal assistants

Directly employed personal assistants may also be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) (https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay) if they are self-isolating or are unwell. SSP is paid from the date they self-isolate. You will need to speak to your individual employer.

If a personal assistant needs to self-isolate, they may be entitled to a £500 payment via their local authority whether they are employed or self-employed. Find out more about claiming financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme).

Local authorities, at their discretion, may also meet the costs of self-isolation through the Infection Control Fund (ICF). However, if a PA is receiving their full wage from their employer through the ICF, they will not be eligible for the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

Find your local authority contact details for social care support (https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Local-Authority-Adult-Social-Care/LocationSearch/1918)

Coronavirus testing contact centre: call 119 (lines are open from 7am to 11pm daily)

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1. 9 April 2021
   Updated to reflect the policy change for personal assistants to conduct 2 LFTs a week and not to test with PCR unless to use for a confirmatory PCR following a positive LFT.
2. 16 February 2021
   First published.

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- Check
- Change
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Check what you need to do

(https://www.gov.uk/transition)

Explore the topic

- Healthcare workers, carers and care settings during coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/healthcare-workers-carers-and-care-settings)
- Testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/testing)