Department of Health & Social Care

From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

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24 April 2020

Dear Employer,

MAKING IT EASIER TO GET YOUR ESSENTIAL WORKERS TESTED FOR CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus testing for essential workers or their household self-isolating with symptoms, is vital to help get them back to their important work as soon as it is safe to do so.

Ultimately, we want to make sure that every essential worker who needs a test can get one.

To that end, last week we expanded testing out to more frontline staff. That means testing is now available, in England and Scotland initially, for:

- essential workers with symptoms
- people who live with essential workers and have symptoms

The full list of eligible essential workers can be found at www.gov.uk/coronavirus-get-tested
For information on coronavirus symptoms and self-isolation, please refer to the national guidance

We are also pleased to announce the launch of a new online portal where employers in England and Scotland can register and refer self-isolating staff or members of their household. This will make the process of getting an appointment quicker and easier, while reducing the burden on business. In addition, self-isolating employees in England and Scotland can book tests online themselves.

Using the new online portal
For employers wishing to support their employees by managing their test 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. A step-by-step guide is attached with this letter.

Employee Self-Referral
Essential workers in England and Scotland who are self-isolating can also now book their test online directly by visiting www.gov.uk/coronavirus and clicking on one of the options under “Testing for coronavirus (COVID-19).”

Types of testing

We have established over 30 drive-through regional test centres and we are increasing this to up to 50 by the end of April. You can now refer essential workers to this type of testing and your employees can book it directly.

We are also introducing a range of additional testing methods to support testing accessibility, including home test kits. There are currently a limited number of these kits available, however we anticipate that availability will increase significantly by the end of April. The home test kits will be delivered by Amazon and sent directly to the individual's home so they can perform the test themselves. They will then be collected by Royal Mail couriers. This option is available via the employee self-referral route.

Further information
We have attached a step-by-step guide for using the employer referral portal.

If you need further guidance and support, 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.

Testing is a crucial part of our response to the coronavirus crisis and supporting you in opening up your businesses. We appreciate all your help and support in ensuring your employees have fast access to testing.

Yours ever,



MATT HANCOCK