



# Residential Care Home Lateral Flow Device Testing – Summary Guidance

In December 2020 Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing was released for use in Residential Care Homes. This document provides brief guidance for staff on the new testing regime, which includes Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and LFD testing for staff and PCR testing for clients.

The new LFD test is set to compliment the current PCR testing that is already in place in care homes. The LFD will indicate whether a staff member is likely to be carrying the virus therefore allowing for early detection and intervention for people at the very start of the onset of the disease.

LFD testing is for staff only

There are a number of things that should be put in place before your teams starts to use the new test, so ensure that you are prepared.

## To prepare, make sure you:

- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the PCR/LFD testing guidance and instructions – take a look at the [video](#) for supporting residents over 65 or with dementia and the [online assessment tool](#).
- ☐ Have all staff who will conduct LFD testing complete the NHS Test and Trace online training. Each home will receive an email with details giving them access to the training portal. Once access is granted, all testing staff are required to watch the training videos and complete the online assessment. If you have not received an email with access details, please call 119.
- ☐ Ensure that you have enough trained staff (Processing Operatives) available to process the number of LFD tests being conducted.
- ☐ It is important to discuss the testing approach with your clients and staff. Spend time preparing clients and explaining the procedure to them, as appropriate.

- ☐ Review your personal protective equipment (PPE) supply and ensure you have the correct PPE to carry out testing.
- ☐ Ensure a proper workstation is available for preparing and packing the tests.
- ☐ Look out for the delivery confirmation email letting you know when tests will be delivered.
- ☐ Have a consent form prepared for staff.
- ☐ Have a workflow to allow tests to be easily recorded, conducted and registered as swiftly as possible. It is recommended to have two staff members; one to conduct the test and the other to record the relevant information needed for registration.
- ☐ Have booked a courier collection for PCR tests by 7pm the day before you start testing. This can be arranged from the [test kit collection website](#).

## Testing and Retesting Schedules

In January, all residential care home managers need to be prepared to start using the LFD (Lateral Flow Device) alongside the existing PCR testing schedules. The Retesting Schedule is given in full on Page 5 of the [full NHS guidance](#). This demonstrates the required frequency of testing. This is summarised below:

### Staff Testing Cycle:

- Testing needs to cover **the whole staff team every week**, you can however run several different cycles in order to manage this, particularly in services which have large staff teams.
- On the **usual day of weekly PCR testing** staff will also need to undergo an LFD test as well.
- **3 – 4 days later** (should be within the same week) all staff should then undergo a second LFD test.
- You will need to **plot the testing days** to ensure that this weekly cycle is on-going.

## Client Testing Cycle:

- **Clients should be tested monthly** using the PCR tests only (ensure you have consent and that this is recorded). They should also be tested following any display of symptoms - do not wait for the next PCR cycle.
- Individuals who have previously tested positive should only be tested again with PCR after 90 days have passed from the positive result, unless they develop an onset of new symptoms.

## Other times when an LFD should be used:

- **If staff are working in multiple services:** This can include bank staff, agency staff and staff that work in other settings externally. These staff will need to undertake an LFD before commencing their shift.
- **When staff return to work following sickness, days off or annual leave:** staff should undertake an LFD test before their shift, but only if due to their absence they missed their regular PCR test.

**Note: Staff that have returned to work following a positive test should refrain from taking the PCR test for 90 days unless they become symptomatic.**

However, they should have the LFD test in line with their colleagues' regular cycle.

## Positive Tests:

- If an LFD test is positive, then the person concerned will immediately need to undertake a PCR test and they should refrain from work until the result of the PCR is received. If the PCR is negative, they can return to work, if positive they should follow the isolation guidance. This confirmatory PCR is in addition to the regular PCR testing cycle, unless it is administered on the same day as the scheduled PCR.

## Positive Tests and the impact of Tiers:

- **In Tier 4 or National Lockdown** – if **any** person in the home tests positive, using either the LFD or PCR, then **all** staff should be tested daily from that point for 7 days using the LFD, but continue with the normal PCR cycle. If any are found positive, then follow the Positive Test guidance above.

- In all other Tiers, as applicable, in the case of a positive test in the home, **all staff should continue with their normal PCR/LFD cycle.**
- **Staff with symptoms should NOT be tested in the service.** They should instead be referred for testing at a regional / local test centre or in their own home. Please [click here](#) for more information.

The use of LFD testing is crucial to enabling care homes to take early preventative action in the event that a staff member is, or may be, infected with Covid-19. LFD testing is not meant to be super accurate or definitive.

For this reason it is important to ensure that PCR tests are used for any staff that show positive LFD tests. Correctly using this testing combination will enable providers to keep their staff and residents safer and achieve greater warning of possible outbreaks. Used in conjunction with the new vaccines it will mean the defeat of the virus in our care homes.

Using this testing combination will enable providers to keep their staff and residents safer

New government guidance has been published around self-testing. To find more information from the government and NHS [please click here](#).

