

Staff testing – Guidance on COVID-19 PCR results

This guidance is for LHT staff members , or their household contacts, who have been tested for COVID-19

Advice for staff awaiting test results

- It is important that LHT and Public Health England (PHE) guidance is followed after a staff test is taken (i.e. while waiting for the result). If staff members are symptomatic, or a member of their household is symptomatic, the household should self-isolate at home pending COVID-19 test results
- If staff members are asymptomatic at the time testing but become symptomatic after the test, or if a household member becomes symptomatic, they should immediately self-isolate and contact their line manager

Receiving your COVID-PCR result

- Symptomatic individuals tested at LHT will be notified of their result by SMS text message or phone call, community testing results are returned by email or text message. For asymptomatic screening, staff will be told about the how they will receive results at the time of testing
- Most results are available at 24 - 72 hours, but this may be longer during periods of high demand on testing
- Laboratory staff, infectious diseases, microbiology or virology teams should not be contacted for test results, even if >48 hours have elapsed, the results will be communicated as soon as they are available

Records of staff member's COVID-19 PCR results

- Test results are sent to the infectious diseases administrative staff and the occupational health team where they are added to staff members' OH records
- Tests results are recorded in staff members' PPM+ records, it is not appropriate for staff to access PPM+ records for themselves or household members. Please follow trust guidance on information governance

Advice for staff members, or their household contacts, with **negative** COVID-19 PCR results

- **Symptomatic staff members** with a negative test result should return to work after their fever has subsided (>48 hours without using anti-pyretics) and when they are feeling well enough to work (a mild cough is acceptable)
- **Staff with a symptomatic household contact** who has a negative COVID-19 test can return to work provided the staff member remains asymptomatic themselves. If the staff member or another household contact develops new symptoms after this time, self-isolation and further testing is indicated
- **Asymptomatic staff screening tests.** Staff tested as part of a screening programme with a negative COVID-19 test result should continue to work provided they (and their household) remain symptom free
- **A negative COVID-19-PCR result is only relevant to the day of the test, if new symptoms develop within a few days of a negative test, self-isolation and retesting is required**

Advice for staff members, or their household contacts, with **'indeterminate'** or **'VOID'** COVID-19 PCR results

- Some COVID-19 tests yield 'indeterminate' results (a test that cannot be confirmed as positive or negative). If this occurs, a repeat swab should be sent **and staff member/household contacts should immediately self-isolate** (if not already isolated) whilst waiting for the second result
- Some COVID-19 tests yield 'VOID' results, this mean the test was incorrectly taken, erroneously labelled or leaked in transit and should be repeated. Self-isolation should follow PHE guidelines/flow chart below

Advice for staff members, or their household contacts, with **positive** COVID-19 PCR results

- Please follow the flow diagram below, the actions required are dependent on the date of the COVID-19 test, the staff member's symptoms and the patient group they care for
- Clinical line managers and the IPC team will continue to support staff to decide when it is safe to return to work

Staff testing – Guidance on COVID-19 PCR results

Flow chart for self-isolation and return to work for staff tested for COVID-19
(see below for advice for staff in contact with extremely vulnerable patients)

Asymptomatic
staff member*

COVID-19 PCR test

Test result awaited

Staff member asymptomatic
- staff member can continue to work

Symptoms develop in staff or household member

Test result available

Symptomatic staff member, or household contact with symptoms

COVID-19 PCR test

Test result awaited

Self-isolation for staff and household members pending result

See PHE guidance on protecting vulnerable household members

Test result available

COVID-19 PCR negative
See guidance above

COVID-19 PCR 'indeterminate'
See guidance above

COVID-19 PCR positive result in an asymptomatic staff member

Advice for all staff:

1. Self-isolate for a minimum of 7 days from test date
2. If symptoms develop in the staff member after the positive result, self-isolation should continue for a minimum of 7 days from 'Day 1' of symptom onset
3. On 'day 8', staff can return to work if feeling better and there has been no fever for 48 hours (if staff member has contact with bone marrow transplant patients - see below for additional advice)
4. If symptoms develop in a household contact, there is no need to amend return to work date. Staff should self-isolate for 7 days from date of the positive test provided they remain asymptomatic
5. See PHE guidance on protecting vulnerable household members

COVID-19 PCR positive result in a symptomatic staff member or household contact

Staff member is COVID-19 positive:

1. Self-isolate for a minimum of 7 days from symptom onset
2. On 'day 8', staff can return to work if feeling better and there has been no fever for 48 hours (if staff member has contact with bone marrow transplant patients - see below for additional advice)
3. Post-viral cough is known to persist for several weeks in some cases

A staff member household contact is COVID-19 positive:

1. Continue to self-isolate for 14 days from the onset of the first household member's symptoms. Staff may return to work if asymptomatic on day 15
2. If you develop symptoms within the 14 day period, inform your line manager and a decision will be made as to whether you should be tested.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

* For example, staff who have volunteered for a COVID-19 screening study

Additional advice staff in contact with Bone Marrow Transplant patients.

COVID-19 PCR positive result in asymptomatic or symptomatic staff member

Advice for staff members with a COVID-19 positive test who are in contact with bone marrow transplant patients:

1. Staff should self-isolate as advised in the flow chart above
2. Prior to return to work with bone marrow transplant patients, staff **must also**
 - i) Show no symptoms of COVID-19 for 7 days **AND**
 - ii) Have a repeat test for COVID-19
 - Staff should attend for a repeat test when they have been symptom free for 7 days.
 - If repeat COVID-19 PCR is negative, the staff member can return to work
 - If repeat COVID-19 PCR is positive, a further 7 days of self-isolation is recommended and the staff member's line manager should be contacted to offer advice on safe return to work