

## Testing for Flu using LFDs in South East Care Homes Q&A following webinar on 10th Sept 2025

### About this evaluation

This evaluation by the UKHSA South East Health Protection team is planned to run from late September 2025 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. We want to assess whether using LFDs (lateral flow devices) that can detect both flu and COVID-19 improves the management of suspected respiratory outbreaks in care homes compared to the usual process of organizing testing through laboratories. Some care homes may be contacted during the evaluation for feedback. A summary of findings will be shared after the evaluation is complete.

### Reminders

- If a resident is severely unwell, then seek urgent medical help as usual through the GP, NHS 111, or dialing 999.
- If you suspect or confirm flu in two or more residents (positive test or symptoms and unable to test), then call the UKHSA South East Team on 0344 225 3861.
- After using Combo Rapid LFD tests, you **must** complete the online form for all results (negative, positive, void) in order to request replacement kits: [COVID-19 and flu tests in ARI outbreaks in adult social care homes - GOV.UK](#)

### Eligibility & Settings

**Q: Are all care homes eligible for the scheme?**

A: All CQC-registered nursing and residential care homes for adults in the South East region are included.

**Q: Will this also apply to extra care housing or supported living?**

A: No. Only CQC-registered nursing and residential care homes are part of this evaluation.

### Distribution of Tests

**Q: Will residential and nursing homes receive five tests each?**

A: Yes. Each of the 2,600+ care homes in the South East will receive a pack of

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five tests in September. As per usual practice, we only recommend testing the first few unwell residents when an outbreak is suspected – so five tests will be enough to confirm whether flu or COVID-19 is causing the outbreak.

### **Q: Will tests be automatically sent to care homes?**

A: Yes. Initial packs of five tests are being delivered from mid-September. When you report results [online](#), a replacement pack will be automatically sent to your care home (usually within a week). Please keep the tests in a safe place for use ONLY when you suspect you have a flu outbreak.

### About the Combo Rapid LFD Test

#### **Q: How does the test determine COVID or flu?**

A: The test uses virus-specific markers to identify influenza A/B or COVID-19. It makes it clear on the LFD which one it has detected. Please see the package insert for more guidance.

### Use of Tests

#### **Q: What PPE should I wear when taking the tests?**

A: You should wear disposable gloves, apron and fluid repellent surgical mask, with suitable eye/face protection. More details on what PPE to wear when managing residents with respiratory infections can be found on the following [webpage](#).

#### **Q: Are these tests available for staff who have symptoms?**

A: No. The evaluation is focused on detecting flu outbreaks in care home residents as per usual practice in the management of such outbreaks.

### Test results

#### **Q: Will residents who are not normally eligible for COVID treatment on the NHS be able to get treatment if they test positive on these LFDs?**

A: [Current guidance for COVID-19 antivirals](#) eligibility applies. Please ensure you are aware of local pathways to have residents assessed for treatment.

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**Q: If a resident tests positive for flu, will they get antivirals?**

A: If a resident tests positive for flu on an LFD, please contact UKHSA on 0344 225 3861. UKHSA will advise which residents may benefit from antivirals, both for treatment and/or to help prevent further spread.

**Q: Do I need to report all combo rapid LFD results?**

A: You should report all results [online](#) to automatically receive a replacement pack of LFDs. If you detect flu or have an outbreak and are unable to use the LFDs, then you should contact UKHSA HPT on 0344 225 3861. For all other test results, if you email [SE.AcuteResponse@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:SE.AcuteResponse@ukhsa.gov.uk), we can send through a copy of the latest national IPC advice.

### Missing/not received tests

**Q: What if the combo rapid LFD tests are lost or not received?**

A: If you have an outbreak and are unable to use the combo rapid LFDs, then you should contact UKHSA HPT on 0344 225 3861. If you have not received your tests by 30<sup>th</sup> September, please email [SE.AcuteResponse@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:SE.AcuteResponse@ukhsa.gov.uk) with your care home details.

### Expired tests

**Q: What if the combo rapid LFD tests have expired?**

A: The tests are valid until 31st December 2025. If the tests are out of date they can be put in general waste. If you have an outbreak and no in-date LFDs, then contact UKHSA on 0344 225 3861 as per usual practice.