

This announcement is for care homes in England.

As we previously announced this week, we are changing the number of rapid lateral flow tests (LFTs) sent per box.

NHS Test & Trace will move to sending rapid lateral flow test kits in boxes of 7. These will replace the boxes of 25. You will still receive enough rapid LFTs to cover the testing requirements for your organisation. You will receive boxes of 7s the next time you place an order for test kits, please continue to use your boxes of 25 until you next need to order.

What does this mean for visitor testing?

In line with MHRA rules, the boxes of 7 rapid lateral flow test kits can be used for self-test by anyone. This means that once your care home receives boxes of 7s, visitors can be provided with test kits to conduct at home, at the discretion of care home managers.

Testing onsite at the care home is preferable for assurance purposes, however recognising that individuals now have access to testing through other routes and visitors may be travelling long distances to visit, care home managers can allow visitors to test through other means including:

- Assisted testing at another site such as an Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS);
- Self-testing at home through test kits provided by the care home once care homes have access to packs of 7 test kits;
- Self-testing at home using test kits provided by Government such as at a school, workplace, universal testing offer, or collected from a pharmacy.

Where visitors will be self-testing, managers may wish to supervise the first few tests on site and provide support to ensure visitors are confident conducting the tests at home and they are being completed and reported satisfactorily.

Visitors are not able to test themselves at home with a test from a pack of 25 in line with MHRA regulations.

Wherever the test is conducted, it must be done on the day of the visit. Once the visitor has registered the test, they will receive a confirmation of their result by text message (SMS) and email to show proof of result. Visitors should show proof of a negative test result before every visit, such as: an email or text from NHS Test and Trace or a date stamped photo of the test cartridge itself.

All tests done at home should be registered to the Unique Organisation Number (UON) of the care home and managers should ensure visitors are aware of their UON.

Please read full updated policy on visiting and testing in care homes at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>.

Detailed guidance and additional resources on how to conduct rapid lateral flow testing within your home can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-adult-social-care-settings>.

Please do not respond to this email, as this mailbox is not monitored. If you have any queries, please call our helpline on 119.

Many thanks,

NHS Test and Trace