

The following key messages are aimed at GP practices, PCN Directors, Primary Care Leads, Practice Managers and Practice Staff and Community Pharmacists and relate to covid 19 testing and vaccination delivery

Antigen Testing:

How to access antigen testing?

Health and care staff and members of the public experiencing COVID 19 symptoms can access a test via the National Self – Service Portal, where there will be an option to select an appointment at a local Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) or a home test kit. For further instruction please follow this link

<https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/test-type>

Alternative Staff Access Route:

Health and Care staff and essential workers, may be able to seek assistance from their employer in obtaining a test via the Organisational Employer Referral Portal if their organisation is registered for this portal.

Antibody Testing:

In South East London we ran a programme of antibody testing for health and social care staff from end of May until the end of August (some residual testing was undertaken after that in one or two boroughs). At that point the NHS, in conjunction with local authority colleagues, agreed to stand down the services as it was felt the majority of those eligible who wanted to have a test would have taken the offer up.

GPs may offer antibody testing to patients where there is a real clinical need, noting the current limitations around what a positive or negative result means. And regardless of the results, government guidelines on social distancing, use of facemasks and PPE as directed should still be followed

All paid staff in the Adult Care sector can now apply for a new at-home test which has just been launched by the DHSC. The test, which is posted to the individual's home address, involves them taking a finger-prick blood sample (using a lancet), which is then sent back via post to a laboratory for testing. Communications have been sent out to all care homes, domiciliary care organisations, personal assistants and local authorities." The test can be accessed using the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests>

Current Issues and actions:

South East London Trusts and local boroughs continue to operate additional testing provision for symptomatic staff and household members, whilst demand for Pillar 2 remains high. These sites have very limited capacity and therefore staff are asked to try booking through Pillar 2 as a first port of call. The median TAT for national sites is improving and largely under 48hrs for all.

Domiciliary care agencies are now able to access regular PCR testing, in the same way as care homes. Agencies are reportedly starting to receive emails with links to register, with their Unique Organisational Number (UON).

Following the NHS Test and Trace pilot, to enable swab testing in General Practice settings; the offer for PCR swab testing capability will be extended to all GP services in England from 2nd November 2020. The service will be voluntary and on an opt-in basis and is for use with patients who present with Covid symptoms, symptomatic GP staff and their household members where needed. Note there will be no public communications around this as the first point of call should still be one of the national routes.