

Southwark COVID-19 Step-up testing standard operating procedure v4.0

Context

Step-up testing refers to testing for service users who are moving from the community into an adult residential care home. A [service model](#) has been set out on the national guidance page which includes guidance on isolation of residents, the timing of tests, and when repeat tests may be required. The national guidance should be used in conjunction with this SOP.

Principles

- Step-up testing is for people who do NOT have symptoms of COVID-19 – those who are symptomatic should be tested through the national testing route.
- Best practice is that result of the test should be available before the service user is transferred.
- It is the responsibility of the allocated Social Worker (SW) to conduct a risk assessment of the service user's situation and conclude that it is safe for them to remain in their own home while awaiting a test and/or the result.
- At the moment, [national guidance on admission, isolation and testing of care home residents](#) states that all residents being admitted to a care home from the community should be isolated for 14 days in their own room. This would include service users with a negative swab test result. PPE is used routinely for caring for all residents.
- If a service user's pre-admission test is inconclusive or cannot be done and the decision is that the person should be transferred to the care home, the national guidance should continue to be followed regarding isolation. These service users should not be cohorted with residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 but they should be kept isolated for 14 days with strict infection prevention and control precautions adhered to.
- Clear consent must be obtained prior to testing using the same principles as in routine practice i.e. with reference to the Mental Capacity Act (2005) as required. National guidance on the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS) during the COVID-19 pandemic, including a section on testing, [can be found online](#).

Pathway for a Southwark resident who is awaiting a planned admission to a care home

1. A person without an allocated SW should approach their GP for a referral to the @Home team.
2. Allocated SW or GP (if the person does not have an allocated SW) notifies @Home team that a test is required with the aim that the test is carried out within 2 days before the planned admission date.
3. The referrer (whether SW or GP) must do this by sending an email to gst-tr.gstathome@nhs.net including:

Service user's name Date of birth NHS number Address The requested date of testing The details of the care home that the service user will be transferred to following the result (if known; however, if this is not yet known, it should not prevent testing taking place) * Confirmation that the service user consents to home testing or if they do not have capacity that this is in their best interest and others in the property agree to the @Home team visit If there are any known safety issues for staff (i.e. any history of violence or aggression from the service user or other people in the property)

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Details of how to access the property (e.g. key safe, service user able to open the door, next of kin will grant access)

*Please provide the details of the confirmed care home to gst-tr.gstathome@nhs.net as soon as it is known.

Referrers should be aware that same day testing may be possible but it is dependent on capacity. Swab tests can usually be carried out the day after a referral is received, however to optimise chances of having testing done on the requested date, referral to the @Home team should ideally be done 2-3 days in advance of the requested testing date.

4. If the referrer is the SW, they must inform the service user's GP practice that a "step up" COVID-19 test in advance of a service user moving to a care home is being done by the @Home team. The name of the care home that the service user will be moving to and planned admission date should be provided if known.
5. @Home team carry out test in person's home using their own test kits and request system.
6. @Home team to inform the referrer (whether SW or GP) of the result when available. An electronic discharge summary will be sent to the service user's registered GP.
7. The referrer (whether SW or GP) must inform the service user of the result.
8. If there is a delay in the testing process, the test result, or the admission such that the test is not within 2 days of admission then a further test after admission to the care home should be done, as per the national guidance. The care home manager should contact publichealth@southwark.gov.uk for assistance with requesting a test kit from SEL CCG. The test kit will be delivered to and collected from the care home by courier, and a member of the care home staff should carry out the test.

Results

If the pre-admission test is **negative**:

1. SW or service user (if the person does not have an allocated SW) to liaise with receiving care setting and give them the result.
2. GP will receive the result in the @Home team discharge summary.

If the pre-admission test is **positive**:

1. If the COVID-19 test is positive, the @Home team will make an initial clinical assessment of the service user and also contact the referrer on the same day with the result. If the referrer is the GP they should contact the duty GP at the service user's registered practice. If the referrer is the SW then the SW should then contact the service user's duty GP on the same day to inform them of the positive test result (information regarding the purpose of the test and the care home should have already been given to the GP practice). The GP will receive an electronic discharge letter but this direct contact will ensure that the result has been received and the GP can follow up with the @Home team or the service user. If the GP or @Home team has any concern about the service user's social circumstances or safety (particularly in the context of a delayed transfer and/or where the service user does not have an allocated SW) these must be escalated to Southwark Council Adult Social Care through usual processes.
2. The decision on whether or not to transfer the service user will depend on their best interest and will require discussions between their SW, receiving care setting, and other professionals involved in the person's care. The GP must be updated as soon as possible with decisions around transfer to a care setting and any changes to social circumstances (such as frequency of checks on the service user), as this will influence the clinical follow-up required.

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3. If the service user completes their self-isolation period at home and a further swab is required prior to transfer, re-referral to the @Home team may need to take place.
4. If the decision is that a service user who has a positive result for COVID-19 is to be transferred to a care home then they must be registered urgently with a new GP practice on transfer (if it is out of the area of their existing GP practice). The receiving GP practice must be informed by the care home of the positive test result and any action that they need to take. Depending on the service user's clinical condition and the location of the care home, it may be appropriate for care to continue to be provided by GSTT @Home team during this transfer period (if the service user is acutely unwell and they are providing care) for continuity. The @Home team is not able to provide follow-up for service users who have tested positive but who remain asymptomatic. Any arrangement is to be based on a discussion between the service user's GP and the GSTT @Home team.
5. The care home must inform the CCG Infection Prevention and Control specialist nurse of the transfer to ensure that the home has the relevant procedures in place to keep residents and staff safe. They should do this by emailing the Southwark Council Public Health team at publichealth@southwark.gov.uk.

If the pre-admission test is **inconclusive/void**:

1. If the swab is inconclusive / void, it should be repeated by the @Home team.
2. If there are any clinical or safeguarding concerns, these should be escalated through appropriate channels (e.g. GP or SW)

In the case of an urgent or emergency placement being required

1. It is the responsibility of the allocated SW to ensure that the service user is in or is transferred to a place of safety.
2. Discussions on best place for service user care follow the usual routes to ensure safety and address any safeguarding concerns, and should include the GP, family, service user, care home etc. as appropriate.
3. If it is decided that it would be unsafe for a service user to remain in their own home before a pre-admission test can be done, then the person should be transferred to the care home without delay. National guidance should continue to be followed regarding isolation for 14 days, as described in the **Principles** section.
4. A swab test should be carried out in the care home as soon as possible after admission. The care home manager should contact publichealth@southwark.gov.uk for assistance with requesting a test kit from SEL CCG. The test kit will be delivered to and collected from the care home by courier, and a member of the care home staff should carry out the test.

Main contributors

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- SEL CCG: Southwark GP Clinical Lead (Emily Gibbs)
- SEL CCG: Infection Prevention and Control Lead Nurse, Lambeth & Southwark (Nicola Sirin)
- Southwark Council: Public Health Division (Hannah Barton, Farrah Hart)

Abbreviations

- SEL CCG: South East London Clinical Commissioning Group

For any questions about the SOP please contact publichealth@southwark.gov.uk

END

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