

Directorate for Primary Care
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To:

PC Leads
General Practice

Widening Access to PCR Testing for Covid-19

PCR testing is currently available to members of the public who display one or more of the key symptoms of COVID-19- continuous cough, fever/high temperature (37.8°C or greater) and loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia). A test can be booked through the following link: [Self-help guide: Access to testing for coronavirus | NHS inform](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816. If a person requires assistance to book a test they can contact 0300 303 2713.

From 19 March 2021 members of the public who may have other symptoms of suspected Covid-19 will be able to arrange a PCR test if asked to by a GP or other clinician.

This will allow testing in circumstances where Covid-19 is suspected but the key symptoms may not be present.

In terms of professional governance, ALL positive PCR results will also be followed up by the Test and Protect pathway. Where GPs are having a shared decision making conversation they should discuss the utility of a PCR test. The PCR test will remain patient initiated.

When booking a PCR test, patients will now have an additional choice:


'A GP or other healthcare professional has asked me to get a test'.

Where this choice is selected there will be no follow up with the clinician to confirm they have discussed this with the patient and this information will not be automatically shared with the clinician.

Where the PCR test is positive patients should follow the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#) and will be contacted by the NHS Test and Protect contact tracing team to help identify any close contacts who may be at risk of contracting the virus. Where the PCR test is negative a follow up appointment may have already been arranged to discuss next steps in treatment or the patient may have been advised to contact you again if the test is negative and symptoms persist.

Home test kits are an option for people seeking a test who are unable to attend a test site in person, patients can select this option when they book a test. Test kits will be delivered the following day directly to the patient's home and can be returned via a priority post box or by Royal Mail courier by calling 0300 303 2713.

Yours faithfully



Naureen Ahmed
Deputy Director - Primary Care Directorate