

10 May 2021

Dear Children's Home Manager

I am delighted to advise you that Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing kits are now available for those children in your care who are not routinely able to attend school or are in between schools – and therefore unable to participate in the schools testing programme. Asymptomatic testing is important because a child could be carrying the virus without symptoms and may spread it to others.

This additional testing for children is not mandatory and is intended to give extra support and confidence as you continue to care for children during the pandemic. It will be for you to decide where testing is appropriate and in the best interests of the child and the home.

We have also provided instructions on visitor testing, with an attached template letter for you to tailor to send to your visitors.

Testing children

Asymptomatic secondary school aged children living in open children's homes (who are not routinely able to attend school or are in between schools) are now able to test twice weekly at home using LFD test kits. For new entrants, the regular testing routine should be timed so that a LFD test can be taken twice upon entry (3-4 days apart), ideally with the first test on day of arrival. It is important to remember that these tests are an additional layer of health protection measure in addition to hand washing, face coverings, and social distancing.

This will not replace current guidance for those with symptoms or those identified as a close contact of a positive case. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in the programme or not, should take a PCR test and follow [government self-isolation guidance](#).

From 10 May, you will be able to access 140 LFD test kits for asymptomatic children from the [national testing portal](#) (this is the same portal you use to access PCR test kits for symptomatic individuals). When you log on to the portal, you will be given a choice of PCR test kits or LFD test kits. If you have not registered on the national testing portal, or have done but have lost your UON, please see section below for instructions on how to register.

An adult will need to administer the test to children aged 11 and upload their test results. An adult will need to supervise children aged 12 to 17 to self-test and upload their test results (although an adult can conduct the test and upload the results if necessary). Young people aged 18 will be able to self-test without supervision where this is suitable. For children aged 11 to 15, you will need to ensure you have written consent to test from their legal guardian or responsible social worker. Children aged 16 and over can consent themselves, unless they are unable to do so due to age or

mental capacity.

All test results will need to be uploaded whether they are positive, negative, or void.

Guidance documents

We have developed detailed guidance on all aspects of the testing process. **These will be available [here](#) shortly on the DfE Google Drive.** These are easily accessible and can be downloaded.

Please contact **DfE coronavirus helpline on 0800 046 8687** if you have any problems accessing the DfE google drive.

The guidance documents on Google Drive include:

- a **webinar**, which explains how to administer and order the test kits;
- a '**How to Guide**' (also attached), which provides the detail on the testing process and uploading the test results;
- a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**, which is a clinical document setting out the testing process;
- a **consent form** to be signed by either the guardian or responsible social worker, or the child – depending on their age;
- a **privacy notice** that explains how test data will be used - to give to either the guardian or responsible social worker, or the child, depending on their age;
- a **test kit log template** to log who each test is given to;
- a **test register** to log test results; and
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**.

Registering to receive test kits

We wrote to you recently to provide instructions on how to register on the [Salesforce national portal](#). If you tried previously and were unsuccessful, please do try again as the system was not previously fully up and running. If your setting has already established an account for ordering PCR test kits via the Salesforce national portal, you do not need to re-register for ordering LFD test kits. The portal is the singular order platform for both type of test kits.

For your information and quick reference, I have set out at **Annex A** the instructions on how to register on the Salesforce national portal.

If you have registered but cannot remember or have lost your UON, you can find this by either calling 119 or by using the government look-up tool on [this webpage](#). To use the government look-up tool, you will need your Ofsted Unique Reference Number and postcode (please note: this is the same reference number used to apply to register initially).

Visitor testing

We have been considering how to ensure that all visitors to children's homes can test for covid-19 before entering the home to keep staff and children safe and to break possible chains of transmission.

The Government announced on 5 April that anyone in England (including those without symptoms) can access [free, rapid lateral flow tests \(LFDs\)](#) for themselves and their families to use twice a week, in line with clinical guidance. In addition, many visitors will also already have access to regular testing through other routes, such as workforce testing or because they are part of the household or bubble of school or nursery aged children.

The Government advice is that asymptomatic testing should be undertaken twice a week with a gap of 3-4 days between each test so that individuals are able to establish if they could be infected with the covid-19 virus. All visitors should, therefore, now be able to conduct a lateral flow test at home or in their place of work prior to visiting the children's home.

Test results should be uploaded to the [Government's Covid-19 results portal](#) and individuals will receive an email and/or text confirming the result of their test and guidance on next steps.

Informing visitors

We encourage you to inform all your visitors that you would like them to take a LFD test prior to visiting your children's home. A suggested template letter for you to give or send to your visitors is attached at **Annex B**.

How can your visitors access testing kits

Instructions on how to access the universal testing kits available to anyone in England can be found on the GOV.UK webpage: [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Testing prior to arrival

You should encourage all visitors to test before they visit using the testing channels outlined above. You cannot ask visitors to provide proof of a negative test result to gain entry.

The use of virtual visits should be the exception and only as a result of public health advice or when it is not practicable to have a face-to-face visit because of coronavirus (COVID-19) as set out in the [Guidance for Children's Social Care Service](#). Visits should not be prevented from taking place where it would be beneficial to the child, or where there is a legal obligation for the visit to take place.

Children visitors (including primary school children)

In the case of family visits where siblings visit, children of secondary age should have regular access to testing through their secondary school. On advice from Public Health England (PHE), pupils in primary schools and children in nursery settings are not included in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme.

PHE has advised that there are currently limited public health benefits to testing primary-aged pupils with lateral flow devices (LFD). In addition, primary-aged pupils, particularly younger children, may find the LFD testing process unpleasant and are unable to self-swab.

We are advising that primary-aged pupils should only be tested if they are

symptomatic, in which case their families should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and book a PCR test for the child.

Care home managers cannot ask for proof of this test. Care home managers can request that the visit is virtual if they are concerned about the risk of transmission. It should, however, be considered that the risk of transmission is lower the younger the age of the child.

Uploading visitor test results

We understand that many visitors to children's home will have a variety of roles and could select a number of different options to describe themselves and their role when uploading their LFD test results. If someone is taking an LFD test because they are coming to visit a child in a children's home, we would like them to indicate that they are a visitor to someone in a social care setting and to tag themselves to your home using your Unique Organisation Number (UON) when uploading their test result.

Detailed instructions for uploading test results are provided in the suggested letter for visitors at **Annex B** (which you will need to tailor with your home's details). You will need to give all visitors the UON for your home to assist them when uploading their test results.

Yours sincerely



**Jonathan Bacon, Deputy Director for Looked After Children
Department for Education**

ANNEX A – TEST KITS FOR CHILDREN’S HOMES – HOW TO REGISTER ON THE SALESFORCE NATIONAL PORTAL

What we need from you

In order to arrange the delivery of kits, and on-board homes onto the portal, providers need to register with Salesforce – the operator of the testing portal.

Salesforce is a secure cloud-based system that DHSC uses to store information on organisations eligible for accessing testing through the National Testing Programme. It allows us to see the number of kits that have been ordered by and delivered to organisations, along with any related queries submitted by that organisation to enable a better service. The address you supply will be shared with Royal Mail for the purposes of test kit delivery, so we recommend you do not use the home’s address where possible.

To ensure your home is included in the list of eligible providers, please follow this link: <https://request-onboarding.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/> to supply the information required to Salesforce. You will need to enter the code 99869778 to access the registration form.

If the organisational external reference field is not showing, please include your Ofsted URN alongside your setting name. We will be unable to authenticate your eligibility without this.

The survey will ask you to provide:

- Organisation External reference (this should be your Ofsted URN, which will be used to authenticate your eligibility)
- Setting name (please include your Ofsted URN here if the organisation external reference field is unavailable)
- Delivery address (we recommend this is not the home address where possible)
- Home manager’s name
- Email address (this must be unique for each account)
- Telephone number
- Job title
- Organisation capacity (number of beds)
- Name of local authority area

Please note that separate accounts will need to be created for each individual home, and the email addresses used for each account must be unique. However, the same delivery address can be used across multiple accounts.

If you have any questions in the interim, please contact the DfE Children’s Social Care Covid-19 Unit at: COVID-19.CSC@education.gov.uk

ANNEX B – Template letter for Children’s Homes to send to visitors

Dear **[insert name]**

We are writing to you as you are a visitor to **[insert name of children’s home]**.

In order to keep the children and staff in our home safe, and to break the chain of onward transmission of covid-19, we would like all our visitors to take a lateral flow device covid test in the 24 hours before they visit our home **[on the day of their visit to our home – for homes with clinically vulnerable children]**.

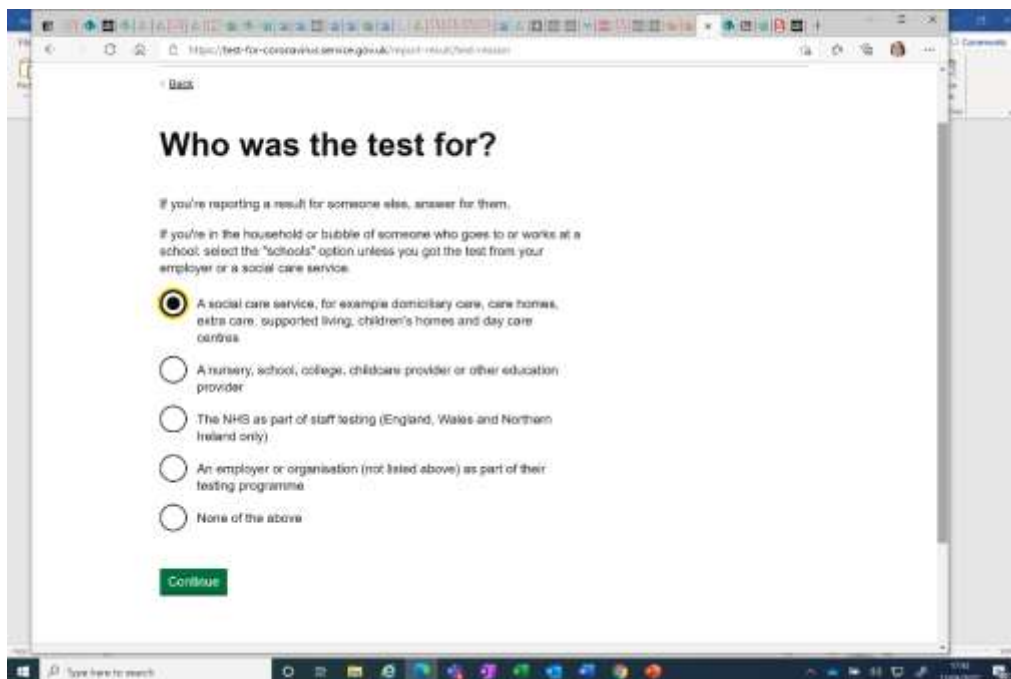
Everybody in England now has access to twice weekly asymptomatic covid testing. You may have access to testing through your employer or through a local authority or community scheme, or because you are part of a household or bubble with nursery or school aged children. If not, instructions on how to access the universal testing kits available to anyone in England, can be found [here](#).

Please ensure that you have ordered or collected test kits in advance of your visit and that these are ready to use in the 24 hours **[on the day of]** before you visit our home.

When you log on to the NHS test results [portal](#) to record your test result you have a number of options to describe your role or position. If you are primarily taking a covid lateral flow test in order to be able to visit someone in our children’s home, please could you describe yourself as a visitor to this children’s home when uploading your test result.

To do this, please follow the instructions below.

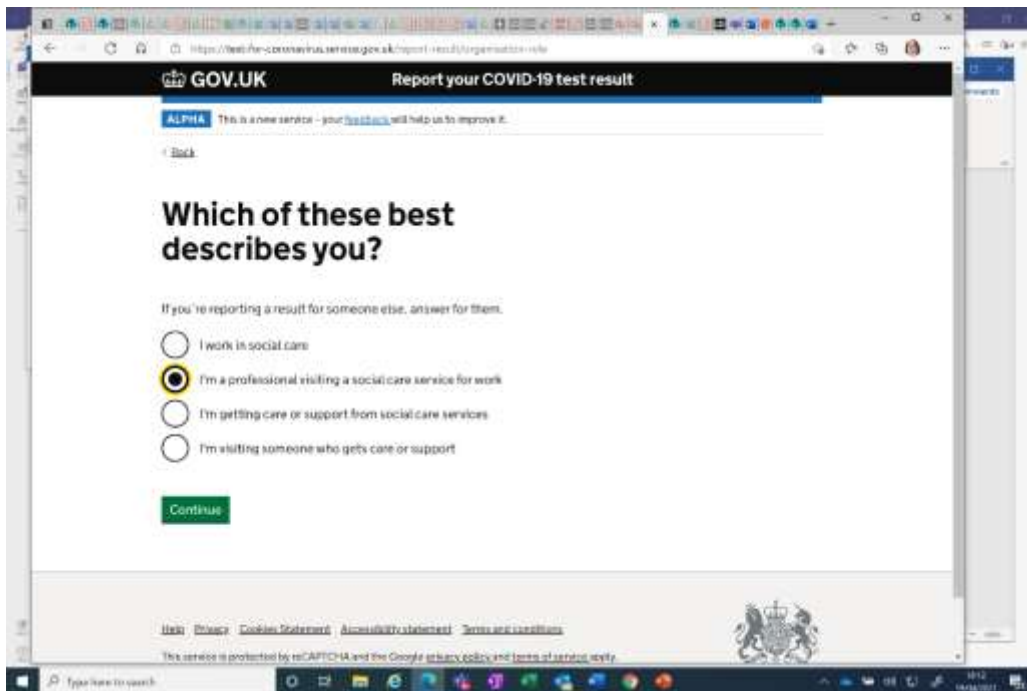
In the section, ‘Who was the test for?’ please select the ‘social care service’ option.



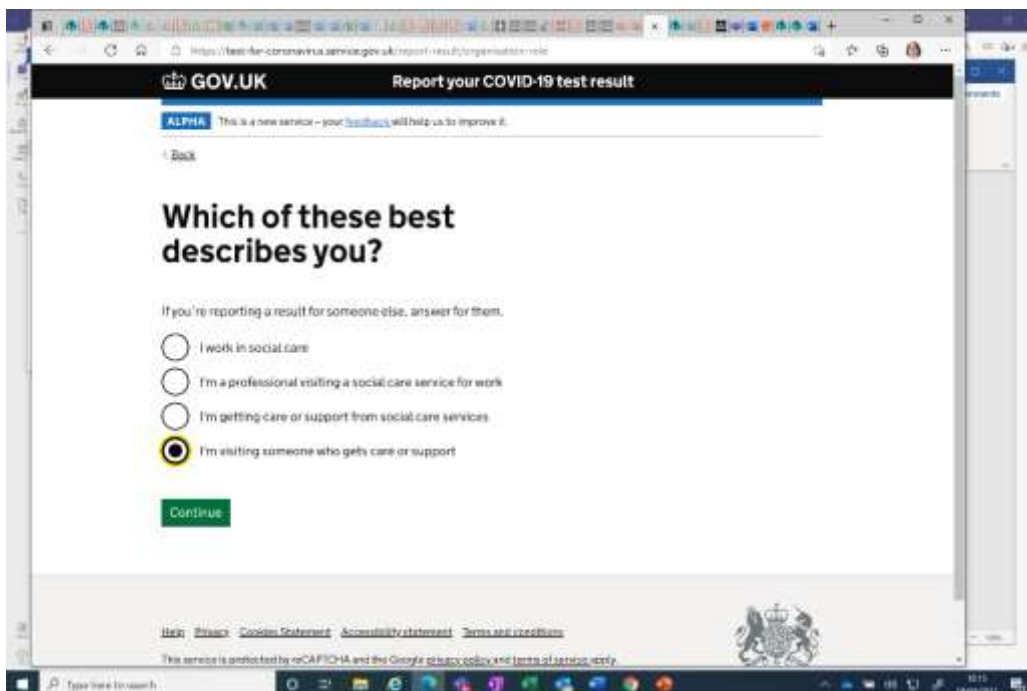
The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the NHS test results portal. The page title is "Who was the test for?". Below the title, there are instructions: "If you're reporting a result for someone else, answer for them." and "If you're in the household or bubble of someone who goes to or works at a school, select the 'schools' option unless you got the test from your employer or a social care service." There are five radio button options: "A social care service, for example domiciliary care, care homes, extra care, supported living, children's homes and day care centres" (which is selected), "A nursery, school, college, childcare provider or other education provider", "The NHS as part of staff testing (England, Wales and Northern Ireland only)", "An employer or organisation (not listed above) as part of their testing programme", and "None of the above". A green "Continue" button is at the bottom.

In the next section, if you are visiting the children’s home in your professional capacity,

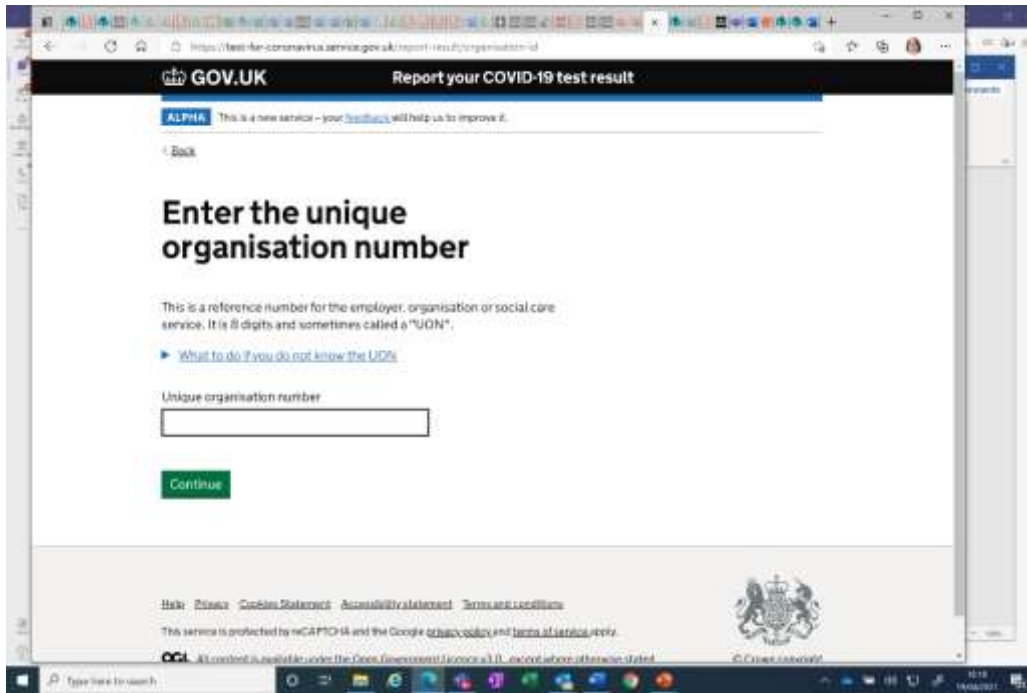
please choose 'I'm a professional visiting a social care service for work'



If you are visiting someone in the children's home in a private capacity – because they are part of your family or a friend, please select the 'I'm visiting someone who gets care and support' option:



In the next section, please enter the UON (unique organisation number) for this home, which is [insert UON].



Please phone 119 if you have any problems uploading your test results.