TEST AND TRACE

JULY 2020

GET IN TOUCH TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN HELP...

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The NHS Test and Trace service was launched by the Government on 28th May 2020. The service has been developed:

- to allow anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) to be tested quickly to find out if they have the virus;
- to trace the close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive and notify them that they must self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus;
- to help identify how, and where, the virus is spreading;
- to enable better isolation of new infections;
- to provide early warning if the virus is increasing again, locally or nationally.

HOW TEST AND TRACE WORKS

The rules of the Test and Trace service are as follows:

A.   For anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus:

1. They must self-isolate for at least 10 days. Anyone in their household must also self-isolate for 14 days.
2. They must order a test immediately at www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test or call 119 if they do not have internet access.
3. If the test returns positive, they must complete the remainder of their 10-day self-isolation. Anyone in their household must also complete self-isolation for 14 days.
4. If the test returns positive the NHS test and trace service will contact them by text, email or telephone and provide them with instructions on how to share details of people with whom they have had close recent contact and places they have visited.
5. If the test returns negative no one needs to continue to self-isolate.

B.   When someone is contacted by the NHS Test and Trace team

1. A 'traced' individual (i.e. someone who has had close contact with an individual testing positive for coronavirus) will be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service by text, email or telephone. Under-18s will get a phone call and a parent or guardian will be asked to give permission for the call to continue.
2. They will be advised that they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. They will not be told the identity of the person they have been in close contact with.
3. The 'traced' individual will be told to begin self-isolation for 14 days from their last contact with the person who has tested positive, even if they don't feel unwell. This is because if they have been infected, they could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days.

4. The 'traced' individual's household do not need to self-isolate at that point unless the 'traced' individual has symptoms. Their household should however avoid close contact with the 'traced' individual.
5. If the 'traced' individual develops symptoms they must order a test immediately at www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test or call 119 if they do not have internet access.
6. If the test returns positive the 'traced' individual must continue to stay at home for at least 10 days. Their household must then begin a 14 day period of isolation.
7. The Test and Trace team will contact the individual to obtain information on who they have had close, recent contact with, and places they have visited.
8. If the test returns negative the 'traced' individual must still complete their 14-day self-isolation period because the virus may not be detectable yet.

HOW TO GET A TEST

Tests can be obtained at www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test

Or by phoning 119

Tests can be carried out at:

- Drive through regional test sites
- Mobile test units
- Via test kits delivered to your home.

TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT A TEST RESULT

If someone develops symptoms, they are encouraged to alert the people with whom they have had close contact over the last 48 hours. They should tell them that they might have coronavirus but are waiting for a test result.

At this stage (until the test result is known), those people they have been in close contact with do not need to self-isolate, but they should take extra care in practising social distancing and good hand washing.

When the Test and Trace team advise someone that they have been in close contact with someone testing positive, they will be told to self-isolate. They will not be told the identity of the person they have been in close contact with.

WHAT DOES 'CLOSE RECENT CONTACT' MEAN?

Close contact means:

- having face-to-face contact with someone (less than 1 metre away)
- spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of someone
- travelling in a car or other small vehicle with someone (even on a short journey) or close to them on a plane

Recent contact means:

- in the 48 hours before symptoms developed and the time since symptoms developed

It is important for employers to ensure the workplace is COVID secure and safe. If a risk assessment has been carried out and employees are socially distancing in line with Government guidelines they should not be coming into close contact with colleagues.

THE NHS CORONAVIRUS APP

The NHS coronavirus app is currently being trialled on the Isle of Wight. When rolled out nationally this app will supplement the other forms of contact tracing.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1 As an employer, what should I tell other employees if one of the team has symptoms and tests positive? Should I let other colleagues know if they work closely with that person? Should I ask them to self-isolate?

If an employee develops symptoms and is tested positive any co-workers who they identify as having had close recent contact with will be notified by the NHS Test and Trace team. They will be advised that they need to self-isolate for 14 days. If they subsequently develop symptoms, they will be required to obtain a test.

If one of your employees develops symptoms, they should be encouraged to alert people they have had close contact with, including co-workers. You can even offer to help them alert others so that you can monitor the situation.

But you shouldn't take it upon yourself to alert others without talking to the employee first.

Q2 We have an employee isolating after a positive test. Some of our employees are very anxious and feel unsafe in the workplace. They are unable to work from home, how can we support them?

Good communication, on a regular basis is important to reassure employees of the health & safety measures you have in place to ensure social distancing is followed. Providing plenty of opportunities for employees to talk to you and ask questions will help reassure them. Its natural for people to feel uneasy.

Q3. Does an employee need to provide evidence that they have been asked to self-isolate?

An individual who has been asked to self-isolate will receive formal notification setting out how long they need to isolate for. You should ask for this evidence.

Q4 What do I pay an employee who is self-isolating?

You should pay Statutory Sick Pay as a minimum for the duration of the self-isolation (or Company Sick Pay if you offer it). You should encourage employees to self-isolate when advised to as this is the way the spread will be reduced, and a second peak will be avoided. Employers can now make a rebate claim for 2 weeks of SSP per employee.

If the employee can work from home, and are well enough to do so, you can pay them normal pay.

Employers are encouraged to support employees as much as possible to encourage them to self-isolate as this is believed to be the most effective way of preventing the spread and a second peak.

An employee may also take paid holiday if they wish and you agree it.

Q5 How do you deal with someone told by the Test and Trace team to self-isolate if they do not want to do so?

You should encourage everyone to sign up to the system, and follow all instructions received. If someone has tested positive, they must stay away from the workplace and self-isolate.

Q6 What happens if an employee is repeatedly told by the Test and Trace service that they need to self-isolate as they have been near someone who has tested positive?

If it happens on multiple occasions, there should be a conversation about the steps that they are taking to follow social distancing requirements. If the close contact is occurring in the workplace, a further Risk Assessment is likely to be required to ensure adequate social distancing is taking place.

Q7 If our workplace meets requirements for social distancing will employees be identified as part of the Test and Trace system and therefore need to self-isolate if a co-worker tests positive?

If your workplace is COVID secure, and social distancing guidelines are in place and being followed, employees should not be coming into close contact with each other in the workplace.

If the employee with symptoms receives a positive test result, they will be asked to share the details of people they have been in close recent contact with. The Test and Trace service will ask them for details about their movements and whom they have been in close contact with. If they advise the tracers that they have been in close contact with co-workers those co-workers will be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service. They will be questioned and advised whether they need to self-isolate or not.

Q8 An employee's partner has been made aware via Test and Trace that they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive and must self-isolate. Does our employee also need to self-isolate?

If your employee's partner has symptoms and your employee lives with them then your employee should also self-isolate. If your employee's partner does not have symptoms, your employee does not need to self-isolate unless their partner subsequently tests positive.

Q9 Can I force my employees to download the Test & Trace App once it becomes available?

You can request that your employees download the App and explain how this will support Health & Safety in the workplace. However, you cannot insist the App is downloaded.

Q10 What information will individuals be asked to supply to the Test and Trace service?

Contacted individuals will be asked to provide the name, telephone number and/or email address of anyone they have had close contact with in the 48 hours prior to symptoms starting. The Test and Trace service have advised that information provided will be handled in strict confidence and will only be kept and used in line with data protection laws.