

## **Test and Protect – Frequently Asked Questions**

Test and Protect is a national strategy aimed at managing the spread of COVID-19 and breaking the chain of transmission. Anyone who suspects they have COVID-19 will be tested. If you test positive, your close contacts will be traced and advised to isolate for 14 days. The aim of Test and Protect is to quickly identify cases of the virus and then act to break the chains of transmission.

It is not a substitute for the measures already in place, such as social/physical distancing, good hygiene practices – particularly thorough hand washing – and wearing a face covering when in public. Test and Protect will require people to isolate in their homes if they have symptoms or are identified as a contact of a confirmed case. This will not be easy and this document will contain information on the support available to people required to isolate.

The best way to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and the burden it places on our health and social care services is to stay home as much as possible, minimise your contact with people outwith your immediate household, keep your distance from others when you do make essential trips out or take exercise, and to follow good hygiene practice.

This document is in three sections – information for people with symptoms, information for people asked to isolate and information for employers. It will be regularly updated; please keep checking it as we update and amend it.

Test and Protect requires NHS Grampian to gather a large amount of patient information. We would like to assure from the outset that this data will be treated in confidence and in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

### **1. Information for people with symptoms of COVID-19**

1.a For those belonging to one of these groups

Everyone employed by NHS Grampian, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council, NHS24, NHS National Services for Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Community Pharmacies, Community Optometrists, Dental Services, Scottish Prison Service, all and any social care provider, all and any care home, and any unpaid carer or NHS or social care volunteers.

If you experience any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (a new cough, a fever, and/or the loss of your sense of smell and taste) or indeed any other new respiratory symptom you should stay at home, inform your line manager and complete this form

<https://wh.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=158773982605> (Also available on the staff section of the NHS Grampian COVID-19 website)

You will be contacted to arrange a test at one of the three NHS testing sites at Aberdeen, Huntly or Elgin

1.b For those not belonging to one of the above groups

If you experience any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (a new cough, a fever, and/or the loss of your sense of smell and taste) you should call NHS 24 on 0800 028 2816. Please be aware that the first point of referral for a test is at Aberdeen Airport. If you cannot easily reach this testing site you can ask NHS 24 to refer you to the NHS Grampian COVID hub. They can then arrange testing in Aberdeen, Elgin or Huntly. You can also book a test via the NHS Inform website; please note this does not offer the option to request testing other than at Aberdeen airport. You must do this as soon as you start experiencing symptoms; please do not wait to see if you 'get better'.

### **Haven't we all been isolating these past weeks anyway?**

No. The vast majority of us have been staying at home and practising social/physical distancing when making essential trips out or taking exercise. Isolating is quite different. If you are asked to isolate you must not leave your home for any reason. If you are isolating because you are showing symptoms, everyone else in your household will have to isolate – you for 10 days (minimum, if you are still unwell after 10 days you must continue to isolate), your household contacts for 14 days, at minimum.

### **What is isolation?**

If you are isolating as a household (because one of you has symptoms) you must stay at home. You cannot leave your home to visit the shops or take exercise. You should keep your home well ventilated. Use a household cleaner that's active against viruses and bacteria to clean your kitchen, bathroom and other surfaces throughout the house every day. Common household products like detergents and bleach are effective for this. Follow the safety guidance for any cleaning products you use.

If you have access to a garden or outdoor space at your home, you can still go outside. However, you must still keep a 2 metre/6 foot distance from neighbours or anyone who might be passing on the street

If you have been told to isolate because you are the contact of a confirmed case, you will also need to distance yourself from other people in your home. In practice this would mean sleeping separately from them (if possible), staying a separate room during the day and ensuring that room is well ventilated – ideally by opening a window. If you are fortunate enough to have more than one bathroom in your home, then one of these should only be used by you (the isolating person). If you are not able to stay in a separate room you must keep your distance (around 2 metres or 6 feet) from everyone else in your home. In shared areas, like kitchens or bathrooms, you (the isolating person) should not use these rooms at the same time as other people in your household. These rooms should be kept well ventilated, if possible, and cleaned frequently. Use a household cleaner that's active against viruses and bacteria to clean your kitchen, bathroom and other surfaces throughout the house every day. Common household products like detergents and bleach are effective for this. Follow the safety guidance for any cleaning products you use.

If you have access to a garden or outdoor space at your home, you can still go outside. However, you must still keep a 2 metre/6 foot distance from neighbours or anyone who might be passing on the street.

### **Where can I get tested?**

If contacting NHS 24, the first point of referral for testing under the Test and Protect programme is the UK government facility at Aberdeen Airport. There are also three testing hubs run by NHS Grampian at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, in Elgin and in Huntly. If you are an eligible member of health and social care staff (information about this is available on our COVID-19 website) or facing serious difficulties in accessing the Aberdeen Airport site you can ask NHS 24 to refer you to the local COVID hub to arrange testing. Please note this request can only be made during a phone call to NHS 24; it is not possible to request an alternative testing site if booking online.

Wherever your test takes place, you should travel there alone if at all possible.

### **What if I cannot get to a test centre?**

If you are unable to attend a drive-through test centre the NHS Grampian COVID Hub will discuss your options with you.

### **What does the test involve?**

The test involves taking a throat swab and nasal swab. It is quick and, although it may be a little uncomfortable, it should not be painful.

### **Will people who live with me be tested at the same time?**

No. They will only be tested if they develop symptoms too. If this happens they should follow the process outlined above.

### **How long does it take to get the result – and who will tell me?**

Results should generally be available within 24-48 hours, though this can vary depending on volume of tests performed. You will be contacted directly to confirm your result. Your result will not be sent to your GP or any other clinician treating you; please do not contact them for your result.

### **What happens if I test negative/undetected?**

If your test is negative you are not required to isolate and can return to work (if applicable) once your symptoms have passed and you feel fit and well. Please be aware that it is possible you might be asked to isolate if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case at a later date and negative test at this stage will not prevent that happening.

You may also be told that your result is 'undetected'; this means the test did not detect the presence of COVID-19 in your sample.

### **What happens if I test positive/detected?**

If you test positive, you (the person with symptoms) will have to complete your 10 days of isolation. This should start on the same day you display symptoms, or from the day your test was taken if you are unsure of symptom onset. Anyone living with you will have to complete 14 days of isolation, again starting on the same day you developed symptoms or from the day you are tested if you are unsure of symptom onset. If any of them start to display symptoms, they too will be tested.

As mentioned above, it is important to realise that isolation is not the same as social/physical distancing. If you are isolating you (and the people you live with) must not leave your home for any reason.

You will also be asked to supply information about places you have been outside your home and who you were with.

You may also be told your result is 'detected'; this means the test detected the presence of COVID-19 in your sample.

### **Why do you need to know who I've been in contact with?**

Our local tracing team need information about who you've spent time with, so they can assess who your 'close contacts' are. A close contact is someone who has been physically close enough to you for a long enough period of time, that they may have had the virus transmitted to them. The risk of the virus being transmitted is higher the closer the contact and the longer the duration of the contact. You can minimise the number of contacts you have by staying at home as much as possible and practicing physical distancing (staying at least 2 metres/6 feet away from people not in your household) when you do make essential journeys or take exercise. You could also consider keeping a daily note of who you met, where and for how long.

The more information you can give the local tracing team, the better, as they will ask you will ask you about everyone you have been in contact with and ask you to describe the contact. The team then decide who is a close contact and who needs to isolate; they will then advise them accordingly. You are not obliged to get in touch with your contacts or to answer any questions your contacts may have for you. However, if they are people you know well you are not prevented from speaking to them either – that decision rests with you. The local contact tracing team will ask for your consent to tell your contacts who they have been in contact with. If you do not give permission for this, your contacts will not be given your identity.

### **What support is available to me if I am isolating?**

We're encouraging people to make plans now, in the event that they might be asked to isolate. If you are isolating as the contact of a confirmed case but no-one else in your household has been asked to do so, then they are still able to shop for groceries, pick up prescriptions and so on. It's really important that they maintain the rules on physical distancing while doing so and keep these trips as infrequent as possible.

If your whole household is isolating, or you live alone, family members, friends or neighbours could do these things for you. Most major retailers now offer vouchers you can buy online to make this easier. Your employer or colleagues at work may

also be able to help. You can also register online with retailers to arrange deliveries of food and other essentials while you are self-isolating, but keep in mind that supermarket delivery slots are currently in high demand, and there may not be enough delivery slots available to meet the needs of everyone who wants to access them. If you register for this service before you need to self-isolate, please keep going to the store while you are able. Retailers also have a range of other offerings in place including door-step deliveries of essentials and pre-selected food packages.

If you do not have this kind of support close by, then the Grampian Assistance Hub can help. You can contact the hub via their website <https://www.gcah.org.uk/> or by telephone on 0808 196 3384. This is a free phone service with lines open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

### **Isolation is affecting my mental and emotional wellbeing – who can help me?**

In Grampian we have set up a psychological resilience hub to support people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Anyone can ask for support from the hub; you don't need a referral from your GP or any other clinician. You can find out more about the hub and complete the referral form via our dedicated COVID-19 website <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/for-the-public/mental-health-support/>. You can also call Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87.

### **What about work?**

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) made a joint statement on fair work expectations at the start of the pandemic, which still applies now: it said that no worker should be financially penalised by their employer for following medical advice, and any absence from work relating to COVID-19 should not affect future sick pay entitlement, result in disciplinary action or count towards any future sickness absence related action.

Employers should not ask someone isolating to come into work before their period of isolation is complete, in any circumstances. If you're a member of staff, you should not be asked to go to your place of work, or leave the place where you are isolating.

Depending on your job it may be possible for you to work from home; this is something you would have to discuss with your employer directly.

### **I have tested positive, provided my contacts and isolated for 10 days – now what?**

Once you have completed your 10 days of isolation and if you are feeling fit and well, you are free to return to work (if applicable) and leave the house, according to the agreed rules.

It is possible that you could later be a contact of a confirmed positive case; if this happens – and even if you are currently well and have gone through a period of isolation – you will be required to isolate again for 14 days.

## **2. Information for people identified as contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case**

### **I have been telephoned and told I am a contact of a confirmed case – what does that mean?**

If our contact tracing team get in touch with you to ask you to isolate, it means you have spent a certain amount of time in close proximity to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. This could have occurred in a work setting or while meeting someone socially. We know receiving this information could be worrying or upsetting. Our contact tracing team will do their utmost to explain the situation to you and answer your questions. This document also aims to answer some commonly asked questions and provide advice and guidance. Please bear in mind that our contact tracing team need to gather certain information for public health purposes. They will ask these questions politely and respectfully; we encourage anyone contacted by them to answer questions as fully and honestly as they are able to.

### **Who will call me?**

Our trained contact tracers are drawn from health and social care staff in Grampian. We have also recruited tracers from our three local authorities and other public sector bodies, such as Grampian Housing Association.

### **What will they ask?**

Our contact tracers will ask where you have gone (e.g. to work, to a supermarket), who (if anyone) you came into contact with while you were there and what that contact was like (e.g. did you pass someone in a corridor or did you have a 10-15 minute chat with a neighbour). This is a structured conversation and the same structure will be followed on each call. The questions are designed to see if you came into close, prolonged contact with an individual, potentially putting them at risk of contracting the virus.

### **How can I be sure this call is legitimate?**

The contact tracer will confirm your identity by asking you to confirm some information about yourself.

You will be given a phone number - 01224 558795 - that you can call which will put you through to NHS Grampian and can confirm the identity of the person who is calling you.

Our contact tracing team will **never** ask for details of card or bank account numbers, ask you to provide or fill in social media login details, ask you to set up a PIN, or ask you to download anything. If someone contacts you claiming to be an NHS Grampian contact tracer and asking you to do any of the above they are not genuine and you should end the call immediately.

If you have lost money as a result of a scam call then you should report that to Police Scotland on 101 immediately. If they have received a scam call but not lost money then you should contact Advice Direct Scotland (ADS) who can be contacted through

the website <https://www.consumeradvice.scot/> or by phone on 0808 164 6000. Details of complaints made to ADS are passed on to the relevant local authority.

### **Will I be told who the confirmed case is?**

If the person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 has given their permission, then the contact tracing team will provide this information. If the contact is someone you know, they may also let you know directly but they are not under an obligation to do so. Patient confidentiality remains in place at this time.

### **I feel absolutely fine – why do I have to isolate for 14 days?**

We know that COVID-19 has a long incubation period; that is, it can be present in a person's body for several days before they begin to show symptoms. We also know people can transmit the virus for 48hrs before they themselves develop symptoms. By isolating for 14 days you reduce the risk of, unknowingly, passing the virus on to others. Therefore it is vitally important that you start isolating as soon as the contact tracing team get in touch.

### **Will I be tested for COVID-19?**

No. As a close contact you are at high risk of having picked up the infection, but a negative test does not mean that you do not have the infection, it does not mean you cannot pass it on to others and so does not change the fact that you have to isolate for 14 days. Therefore we need you to isolate and look out for the signs and symptoms of COVID-19: a new cough, a fever and/or a loss of your sense of taste or smell.

### **What happens if I start to develop those symptoms?**

If you experience any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (a new cough, a fever, and/or the loss of your sense of smell and taste) you should call NHS 24 on 0800 028 2816. Please be aware that the first point of referral for a test is at Aberdeen Airport. If you cannot easily reach this testing site you can ask NHS 24 to refer you to the NHS Grampian COVID hub. They can then arrange testing in Aberdeen, Elgin or Huntly. You can also book a test via the NHS Inform website; please note this does not offer the option to request testing other than at Aberdeen airport. At that point it is really important that anyone else living with you starts to isolate as well. If your test result is negative, you (and they) can end your isolation. If your test result is positive, you (the positive case) will have to isolate for 10 days and anyone else in your household will have to isolate for 14 days.

### **What happens if I test positive/detected?**

If you test positive, you (the person with symptoms) will have to complete 10 days of isolation. This should start on the same day you display symptoms, or from the day your test was taken if you are unsure of symptom onset. Anyone living with you will have to complete 14 days of isolation, again starting on the same day you developed symptoms or from the day you are tested if you are unsure of symptom onset. If any of them start to display symptoms, they too will be tested.

As mentioned above, it is important to realise that isolation is not the same as social/physical distancing. If you are isolating you (and the people you live with) must not leave your home for any reason.

You will also be asked to supply information about places you have been outside your home and who you were with.

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### **If I am a contact, will other people in my household have to isolate?**

Provided the other people in your household have not also been identified as a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to isolate. This would change if you – or they – developed symptoms of COVID-19.

### **Haven't we all been isolating these past weeks anyway?**

No. The vast majority of us have been staying at home and practising social/physical distancing when making essential trips out or taking exercise. Isolating is quite different. If you are asked to isolate you must not leave your home for any reason.

### **What is isolation?**

If you have been told to isolate because you are the contact of a confirmed case, you will also need to distance yourself from other people in your home. In practice this would mean sleeping separately from them (if possible), staying a separate room during the day and ensuring that room is well ventilated – ideally by opening a window. If you are fortunate enough to have more than one bathroom in your home, then one of these should only be used by you (the isolating person). If you are not



able to stay in a separate room you must keep your distance (around 2 metres or 6 feet) from everyone else in your home. In shared areas, like kitchens or bathrooms, you (the isolating person) should not use these rooms at the same time as other people in your household. These rooms should be kept well ventilated, if possible, and cleaned frequently

Use a household cleaner that's active against viruses and bacteria to clean your kitchen, bathroom and other surfaces throughout the house every day. Common household products like detergents and bleach are effective for this. Follow the safety guidance for any cleaning products you use.

If you have access to a garden or outdoor space at your home, you can still go outside. However, you must still keep a 2 metre/6 foot distance from neighbours or anyone who might be passing on the street.

Isolation is not easy and it will require you to make some big changes to the way you live your life for a short period of time. These measures may seem extreme but they will reduce the risk to other people in your household.

### **What support is available to me if I am isolating?**

We're encouraging people to make plans now, in the event that they might be asked to isolate. If you are isolating as the contact of a confirmed case but no-one else in your household has been asked to do so, then they are still able to shop for groceries, pick up prescriptions and so on. It's really important that they maintain the rules on physical distancing while doing so and keep these trips as infrequent as possible.

If your whole household is isolating, or you live alone, family members, friends or neighbours could do these things for you. Most major retailers now offer vouchers you can buy online to make this easier. Your employer or colleagues at work may also be able to help. You can also register online with retailers to arrange deliveries of food and other essentials while you are self-isolating, but keep in mind that supermarket delivery slots are currently in high demand, and there may not be enough delivery slots available to meet the needs of everyone who wants to access them. If you register for this service before you need to self-isolate, please keep going to the store while you are able. Retailers also have a range of other offerings in place including door-step deliveries of essentials and pre-selected food packages.

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### **Isolation is affecting my mental and emotional wellbeing – who can help me?**

In Grampian we have set up a psychological resilience hub to support people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Anyone can ask for support from the hub; you don't need a referral from your GP or any other clinician. You can find out more about the hub and complete the referral form via our dedicated COVID-19 website

<https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/for-the-public/mental-health-support/>. You can also call Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87.

### **What about work?**

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) made a joint statement on fair work expectations at the start of the pandemic, which still applies now: it said that no worker should be financially penalised by their employer for following medical advice, and any absence from work relating to COVID-19 should not affect future sick pay entitlement, result in disciplinary action or count towards any future sickness absence related action.

Employers should not ask someone isolating to come into work before their period of isolation is complete, in any circumstances. If you're a member of staff, you should not be asked to go to your place of work, or leave the place where you are isolating.

Depending on your job it may be possible for you to work from home; this is something you would have to discuss with your employer directly.

### **I've completed 14 days of isolation, what now?**

Once your 14 day isolation period is over, you are free to return to work (if applicable) and leave your home, provided you are fit and well and no-one else in your home has developed symptoms of COVID-19. If you – or anyone else in your home – is showing possible symptoms of COVID-19 then you (or they) will have to be tested and the process outlined above begins again.

### **Could I be asked to isolate as a contact more than once?**

Yes. Undergoing isolation as the contact of a confirmed case could happen more than once, depending on your contacts. Limiting your contacts outwith your household and ensuring good physical distancing with those people you work with or see outside your home will significantly reduce the risk of isolation being required.

## **3. Information for employers**

Employers will play a vital role in ensuring that their employees are aware of and able to follow the public health advice to self-isolate when asked to do so by the NHS.

If an employee reports symptoms consistent with coronavirus, employers should make sure they self-isolate at home straight away. Until they have been tested and told if it is safe to leave home, employers should make sure that staff do not have to, or feel that they have to, come in to work. If they are able to and they are not unwell, you can ask your employee to work from home while they are self-isolating.

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) made a joint statement on fair work expectations at the start of the pandemic, which still applies now: it said that no worker should be financially penalised by their employer for following medical advice, and any absence from work relating to COVID-19

should not affect future sick pay entitlement, result in disciplinary action or count towards any future sickness absence related action.

Employers should not ask someone isolating to come into work before their period of isolation is complete, in any circumstances. If you're a member of staff, you should not be asked to go to your place of work or leave the place where you are isolating.

There is detailed guidance for employers available on the Scottish Government website <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect-advice-for-employers/>