



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

POLICY AND STRATEGY

Key (critical) workers testing policy: coronavirus (COVID-19)

Policy sets out a needs based approach testing criteria for NHS and non-NHS workers (key workers).

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Overview

This policy sets out a needs based approach testing criteria for NHS and non-NHS workers known collectively as “critical workers”, and is issued for the benefit of competent authorities, stakeholders and the public.

This policy updates the current policy of [NHS Health Worker \(HCW\) testing CEM/CMO/2020/8](#), and extends it to include non-NHS critical workers.

Who can be tested?

This policy relates to all symptomatic critical workers and to all symptomatic members of their household over 5 years of age, including adults and children (and following the recent announcement including the under 5s). This relates to tests that detects the virus, i.e. swab or antigen testing, and does not consider antibody testing.

In Wales there are approximately 483,000 critical workers; this includes 168,500 healthcare workers and 9,900 police and prison staff. There are 8 categories of critical workers are as follows:

1. health and social care workers
2. public safety(emergency workers) and national security workers
3. local and national government workers
4. education and childcare workers
5. food and other necessary goods

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6. transport workers
7. utilities, communication and financial services workers
8. key public service workers

To help deliver this policy, we have issued [guidance to identify critical workers](#). This will ensure that you can consider if you or your business or organisation is eligible.

Where can you be tested?

Critical workers in Wales can now [apply for a test online \(on GOV.UK\)](#) to book a home testing kit or a slot at a mass drive-through testing centre. [Further detail on the location of these testing centres](#).

Although members of the public can also now access testing, daily allocations of tests are prioritised for critical workers initially where demand outstrips supply.

Health care workers should speak to their employer first as they are prioritised for testing through Community Testing Units which are linked to health care settings. Whilst an online booking system is also being developed for care homes to include staff, in the meantime they should contact their local health board to arrange testing.

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Enable critical workers who have tested negative for SARS-CoV2 to return to work earlier if well enough and asymptomatic. It applies to workers, who according to their employer, cannot observe the 7 day self-isolation or 14 day household quarantining due business continuity reasons; it also assumes that a person testing negative does not risk spreading other illness (e.g. influenza) in the work place.
2. Test all symptomatic individuals who live in the same household as an asymptomatic critical worker (as defined in this policy). Such that if the

symptomatic household member tests negative for SARS-CoV2 the critical worker can return to work before 14 days.

3. Identify workers and places of work where COVID-19 positive staff may have infected patients, shielded individuals or vulnerable people.
4. Describe the process of scaling the availability of COVID-19 tests for critical workers to ensure that testing capacity and resources can be managed.

Unless explicitly indicated critical workers (or a household member) will only be tested if they are symptomatic. A critical worker (or a household member) who has been sent for testing or a test has been requested for them and they are not symptomatic will not be tested.

If testing is requested for a critical worker (or a household member) and relates to early return to work:

- testing should only be offered if they are self-isolating and symptom onset was less than 5 days
- if isolating because household member is symptomatic, there is only benefit if they have been doing so for 12 days or less

The duty of the employer (and occupational health) is the same as for other notifiable diseases. Once critical workers receive their results they will be asked to notify their employers regarding any positive test.

This policy will continue to be reviewed and updated.

About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [Key \(critical\) workers testing policy: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) downloaded.

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