

Workforce and visitor COVID-19 testing arrangements

The GPhC's COVID-19 testing programme is an important element of our strategy to:

- limit the spread of coronavirus among our workforce and visitors to our offices; and
- protect our workforce and service users during the pandemic.

Our testing programme focuses primarily on identifying positive asymptomatic cases - i.e. those who are carrying coronavirus but are not displaying any symptoms - among colleagues who are resuming on site working or visitors to our offices.

This guidance sets out who can be tested, how testing will take place, and what steps will be taken after you are provided with a result.

Safeguards

Our coronavirus testing programme is in addition to, and is not a replacement for, the measures set out in our arrangements for safe working during the pandemic. Please continue to observe safe working practices in respect of:

- hygiene and cleanliness
- social distancing
- wearing a face covering.

If you display symptoms, which include a fever/high temperature, continuous cough and loss of sense of taste or smell, or the NHS test and trace service alerts you that you have been in contact with a positive case, you must:

- not attend work or visit our offices
- self-isolate in accordance with the **Government's guidance**.

In these circumstances, **you must arrange a test here**, rather than seeking to be tested under our workplace testing programme.

Who can be tested under our workplace testing programme?

Workforce and visitor voluntary testing

Participation in our COVID-19 testing programme is voluntary. However, we strongly encourage people who are attending work or visiting our offices to take the opportunity to be tested.

We encourage you to be tested even if you have been vaccinated against coronavirus.

You will not be prevented from working or attending the office if you do not wish to take a test and you do not need to provide proof of a negative test result to attend work or attend our offices.

GPhC colleagues can seek HR advice on this and related matters and may be asked to complete a risk assessment. Advice for visitors is also available, in the first instance from the Adjudications Team who manage GPhC's hearings function.

Eligibility

GPhC colleagues are entitled to take part in our COVID-19 testing programme if they are attending the workplace or working anywhere that is not their home (for example anyone who travels as part of their role, such as inspectors).

This includes our associates or partners, contractors and agency workers. Those who are attending hearings, Council or other on-site meetings may also take part in the testing programme.

While our COVID-19 testing programme is available to anyone who is working exclusively from home, alternative local arrangements may be made by colleagues as appropriate.

The wider availability of the rapid flow tests is part of government policy to ensure all kinds of workplaces can operate safely as lockdown measures are eased.

Testing process

Type of test

The GPhC is using the COVID-19 Self-Test (Rapid Antigen Test) provided by NHS Test and Trace. This involves:

- Taking a swab sample and processing it before reporting the result to the NHS. All the instructions are provided in the test kit. These instructions include information in which an individual should not be tested, including, for example, if you have recently tested positive. Each test kit enables seven separate tests to be administered.

The result of your test is available within 30 minutes.

Arranging your test

Canary Wharf

Colleagues attending the office at Canary Wharf will be encouraged to take a test twice a per week

Test kits are available from the Facilities team upon request. Normally, up to four test kits can be requested at any one time.

GPhC Inspectorate

For colleagues in the inspectorate, prior to undertaking a pharmacy visit, and alongside all the other existing risk mitigation measures, those in this group should:

- either visit an asymptomatic testing centre if there is one nearby to obtain confirmation of a negative test within 48 hours of a planned inspection; or
- complete a lateral flow test on the morning of inspection and confirm the negative result on your workplace risk assessment pro forma. A supply of these may be available from local test sites offering this service, or upon request by contacting Facilities directly (see below).

Currently home based

For colleagues who are home based as a result of lockdown, home testing kits can be ordered by contacting the Facilities team. Please email the **Facilities Helpdesk** and ask them to call you or email your postal address. No personal information will be kept by Facilities. All personal information will be treated in accordance with our Covid-19 privacy notice. The Facilities team will inform you when the home test kit has been sent. All homes test kits will be sent via recorded delivery.

Colleagues are encouraged to take a test twice a week if you plan to attend Canary Wharf.

Office Visitors

The GPhC will increasingly see visitors as lockdown eases e.g. for the resumption of in person hearings or the need to attend business meetings. Under the NHS Test & Trace Service arrangements, the GPhC will enable those visiting our offices to be sent a home test kit upon request before they are due to attend the office. These arrangements will be reviewed each month. All personal information will be treated in accordance with our Covid-19 privacy notice.

If your test result is negative

If your test result comes back negative, you may return to work and/or attend our offices.

The test can tell you if you have coronavirus at that point in time. For this reason, we encourage you to be retested the following week after each negative test.

No testing process is ever 100% accurate and false negatives are a possibility. This means that, even if you have recently tested negative, if you subsequently display symptoms, you must:

- not attend work or visit our offices
- self-isolate in accordance with the **Government's guidance**.

If your test result is positive

If your test result comes back positive, you must:

- self-isolate in accordance with the **Government's guidance**
- **report your positive test** result and follow any instructions you are given (you should do this within 24 hours of your result)
- If you are an employee, you must report your positive test result to your line manager or the **HR Team**.

If you subsequently take a confirmatory test (PCR test that is sent to a lab for analysis) and the result is negative, as long as you have no symptoms you can stop self-isolating and return to work or visit our offices (unless the NHS Test and Trace service advises you otherwise).

Otherwise, you must not attend work or visit our offices for the duration of your self-isolation period.

For GPhC colleagues: during your self-isolation period, we will continue to pay you your full salary on the condition that you must work from home where this is possible (unless you are signed off work sick).

Our actions following a positive test

Information for employees

Within the GPhC, the fact that you have received a positive test will be shared only with your line manager and the HR team.

Information for our wider workforce and visitors

You will not be named as a positive case to the rest of our workforce. However, we will:

- take steps to track your co-workers or those with whom you have had close contact and alert them that they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive
- organise a deep clean of the areas in which you were working.

Your colleagues/people you were visiting do not have to self-isolate unless the NHS Test and Trace Service advises them to do so. However, it is important that they are made aware that there has been a positive case among our workforce so that they can take any extra precautions that they see fit (for example if they have someone in their household who is clinically extremely vulnerable).

Early outbreak management

If we have taken the above steps but if we see more coronavirus cases in the workplace, we will:

- liaise with our local public health protection team
- seek their advice on any additional steps that we need to take to identify and contain any potential COVID-19 outbreak.

Data protection

The GPhC treats personal data collected during the COVID-19 testing programme in accordance with our **Covid-19 Privacy Notice** and the **Employee Privacy Notice**. Any breach of confidentiality will be treated very seriously.

If you have any queries or concerns about data processing during the testing process, these should be **directed to Carole Gorman**, our Data Protection Officer.