Launch of NHS test and trace service

Today, new test and trace schemes go live across England and Scotland. Similar has already been launched in Northern Ireland and for Wales is planned to go live on 1st June.

The NHS test and trace service forms a central part of the government's COVID-19 recovery strategy. This service will also play a vital role in providing an early warning if COVID-19 activity is increasing locally, regionally or nationally.

Currently, the NHS Test and Trace service will notify you by text message, email or phone.

The new NHS COVID-19 app <u>which forms part of the Test and Trace</u> **is still being trialled in the Isle of Wight prior to roll-out. We will provide more details as they become available.**

Alongside existing self-isolation guidance, individuals who have been in close recent contact with someone who has tested positive may receive a notification to self-isolate for 14 days from NHS test and trace because they are at risk of developing symptoms themselves and could spread the virus to others before the symptoms begin.

Contacted individuals may feel well, as the virus could still be incubating when they are asked to isolate. Some people who are asked to isolate may not become unwell, but they must stay at home and self-isolate for the full 14 days.

All managers should encourage employees to follow any notifications to self-isolate and provide support to these individuals when in isolation.

Employees who need to self-isolate will be expected to provide evidence to their manager they have been contacted and told to self-isolate. This absence should be recorded on PSP using the absence type, 'Sick Coronavirus' then selecting 'SCU070 - Coronavirus Self Isolation'.

If employees can work from home while self-isolating then you do not need to record the case as a sickness absence.

The NHS test and trace service will:
- get in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to help them share information about any close recent contacts they have had.
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and notify them they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus.
- provide a notification that can be used as evidence that someone has been told to self-isolate.

Key messages:
- If you have been informed that you are a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for coronavirus (COVID-19), medical advice is clear: you must immediately self-isolate at home for 14 days from the date of your last contact with them.
- Stay at home for 14 days and follow the [Stay at Home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)](). Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis.
- You are at risk of getting COVID-19 for the next 14 days. Since we now know that people can become infectious up to 2 days before symptoms begin, you could spread the disease to others if you do not go into isolation.
- Even if you never get symptoms, you can still be infected and pass the virus on without knowing it.
- You should not arrange for testing unless you develop symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). The most important symptoms are: a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).
- If you do not have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), <u>other people in your household do not need to self-isolate at home with you.</u>

- Even if you have been confirmed as having coronavirus you may still be asked to self-isolate.
- Continue to take steps to reduce the possible spread of infection in your home: for example, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser.
- **Where possible, arrange for anyone who is clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable to move out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of your home isolation period.**
- **If you cannot arrange for vulnerable people to move out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible, following the guidance. For the clinically extremely vulnerable please follow the shielding guidance.**

Support following a workplace outbreak
If multiple cases of coronavirus appear in a workplace, an outbreak control team from either the local or national health authority will, if necessary, be assigned to help manage the outbreak.

If a colleague tests positive, or if you are contacted by a member of the local or national health authority, please report this immediately to Central Postal Control (0345 266 8040).

Contact tracing: contact with co-workers
When someone first develops symptoms and orders a test, they will be encouraged to alert the people, including co-workers, that they have had close contact with in the 48 hours before symptom onset. Line managers may be asked to help facilitate alerting co-workers.

At this stage, those close contacts should not self-isolate, but they should continue to practise social distancing and good hygiene, watching out for symptoms. You should not arrange for testing unless you develop symptoms of coronavirus.

Further guidance is available on https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Managers with enquiries relating to self-isolation and absence should contact coronavirus.support@royalmail.com or Advice and Support on **0345 604 3657**.