

Reinstatement of confirmatory PCR testing & the introduction of auto-rescind.

Briefing for case workers

Go-live: 29th March 2021

From Monday 29th March in England, cases who have a positive LFD test result will be required to take a follow-up confirmatory PCR test.

Index cases will receive a SMS/email following a positive LFD test result, asking them to book a follow-up confirmatory PCR test:

- If the index case had:
 - a LFD test **at home** and their follow-up PCR test result is negative, then they do not have to self-isolate.
 - a LFD test **carried out with a trained assistant present** and receives a negative PCR test result **within** 2 days of the date of the initial LFD test, then they will be notified that they no longer have to self-isolate.
 - If they receive their negative PCR test result 2 days **after** the date of their initial LFD test, then the legal duty to self-isolate remains.

How are index cases notified that they no longer have to self-isolate?

- If an index case (**who had a LFD test carried out with a trained assistant present**) receives a negative PCR test result then:
 - the case will be marked with a 'Deleted Incident' status on NHS Test and Trace
 - they will receive a text (or email) to notify them that their self-isolation can end
- **Contacts** of the index case will also be marked as 'Deleted Incident' and will receive a text (or email) to notify them that they no longer need to self-isolate.
- If a case/contact does not have a mobile number or an email address then they will be manually notified that they no longer have to self-isolate by a ringfenced Trace team.

What is changing? (cont.)

How will this impact you?

- There will be some minor script updates which will include lines to encourage the index case to book a confirmatory PCR test.
- There will be additions to the main Trace FAQs to enable you to respond to questions about this change.
- No direct input is required from you to notify Cases or Contacts (for the digital journey) that they no longer have to self-isolate, as this is an automated process.

The below table provides a summary of the change:

	LFD test: Positive Result	LFD test result enters NHS T&T	Confirmatory PCR required	Automatically notified to end self-isolation?
LFD test at home	Yes	No	Yes	No – not required as test does not enter NHS T&T
LFD test conducted with a trained assistant present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - if result received within 2 days of LFD test
LFD test at home (VOC areas)	Yes	No	Yes	No – not required as test does not enter NHS T&T
LFD test conducted with a trained assistant present (VOC areas)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes – if result received within 2 days of LFD test

FAQs



Question	Response
<p>I have been identified as a contact of a case and I received a text/email to self-isolate on Monday. I've now received a text/email to say I no longer need to self isolate. What do I do?</p>	<p>Advise the member of the public to check the account ID number on both texts/emails. If the account ID number is the same then they should follow the instruction on the latest email/text and they no longer need to self-isolate. If they have received advice to self-isolate from NHS Test and Trace with a different account ID, then they should follow that advice.</p>
<p>What information will be available on NHS Test & Trace if a member of the public is called for a follow up call and claims they no longer need to self-isolate?</p>	<p>If a case/contact claims that they have received a text/email which says they no longer need to self-isolate, check the status of the record. If the status is 'Deleted Incident' then the case/contact no longer needs to self-isolate and no further follow up calls should be made. If status is still active record then they still have to self-isolate. If the case/contact says that they have an SMS/email then they will have to raise an incident (by calling disputes 119).</p>
<p>What happens if people do not have an email or mobile phone number associated with the record?</p>	<p>Currently a contact with only a landline would not be automatically contacted to be told they no longer have to self-isolate. A separate ring-fenced team will be contacting these individuals to notify them and manually rescind them.</p>
<p>What information does the Disputes team have if members of the public call in after they receive their notification to stop isolating?</p>	<p>Comments against the record will be available to reflect that the case/contact has been notified that they no longer need to self-isolate due to a negative confirmatory PCR test.</p>
<p>Why are members of the public now being encouraged to take a confirmatory PCR test when the requirement for this was removed in January?</p>	<p>Lateral Flow Tests (LFD tests) have a very high specificity, possibly as high as 99.97, with fewer than one false positive in every 1000 LFD tests. Despite this, at low prevalence, the probability of a false positive from an LFD test becomes higher. NHS Test and Trace has introduced improvements to automatically link confirmatory PCR results to people advised to self-isolate because they're the close contact of a positive LFD test case. It means we can reintroduce confirmatory PCR for supervised testing without losing the benefits of rapid contact tracing. We are able to carry out genomic sequencing for positive PCR tests. The government's roadmap sets out that controlling of variants of concerns is an essential part of cautiously easing lockdown restrictions in England.</p>

Question	Response
<p>Why can a case not be rescinded after 2 days if they have a negative PCR?</p>	<p>For the confirmatory PCR to accurately reflect if a person’s original positive LFD test is correct, it must be taken within a short time frame. If the confirmatory PCR is taken outside of this window, it is not seen to reflect the original LFD test result and will not result in release the case or their contacts from self-isolation.</p>
<p>Some local authorities are doing case and contact tracing instead of the National Contact Centre. If the LFD Test enters NHS T&T and is then rescinded will local authorities have visibility through the system?</p>	<p>Local authority users will be able to see case and contact records and the ‘Deleted Incident’ flag will have been applied in NHS T&T. This will allow them to see that a case/contact has been notified that they no longer have to self-isolate.</p>
<p>Why are self-reported LFD’s not part of the auto-rescind?</p>	<p>Self-reported LFD test results, taken at home, do not trigger contact tracing. Therefore there is no need to overturn a positive LFD test within the system if the confirmatory PCR is negative. A negative PCR will allow the person to stop self-isolating.</p>
<p>If a member of the public is listed as a contact of more than one person (outbreaks/families), how will they know that the auto-rescind message does not apply to all instances?</p>	<p>The text message/email the contact receives will outline which account ID it relates to and will outline that if the member of the public is named as a contact for other cases they must continue to self-isolate. The text message/email states: <i>Please note that this only applies to account ID [insert account ID number]. If you have received advice to self-isolate from NHS Test and Trace with a different account ID, then please follow that advice.</i></p>

Question	Response
<p>What is the rationale for a time limit for assisted, but not self-reported?</p>	<p>Self-reported LFD test results, taken at home, do not trigger contact tracing. Therefore, there is no need to overturn a positive LFD Test within the system if the confirmatory PCR is negative. A negative PCR will allow the person to stop self-isolating.</p>
<p>What is the impact on self-isolation if there is a delay in taking the PCR test result within the time-frame?</p>	<p>Timings for when the confirmatory PCR must be taken are set from when the LFD test was taken, and the 'timer' is stopped when the PCR is taken, not from when the result is received.</p> <p>For the confirmatory PCR to accurately reflect if a person's original positive LFD test is correct it must be taken within a short time frame. If the confirmatory PCR is taken outside of this window, it is not seen to reflect the original LFD Test result and will not result in release from self-isolation.</p>

Question	Response
<p>Why are you only reintroducing this now?</p>	<p>Although confirmatory PCR testing addresses the risk of false positive results, it also introduces a risk of false negative results, because although PCR testing detects the majority of infectious cases (about 95%) it will not detect them all.</p> <p>Our systems now allow us to align a positive LFD test to a subsequent PCR result streamlining contact tracing.</p> <p>Previously, we had to wait for confirmatory PCR results before initiating tracing. Over the last two months, our approach, based on clear public health advice, has therefore been to advise against confirmatory testing for LFD tests carried out in supervised conditions.</p> <p>We always indicated that we would keep this policy under review, with a view to reintroducing confirmatory PCR when the time is right.</p>
<p>Why do we need confirmatory testing if LFD tests are so accurate?</p>	<p>It has been recommended that a confirmatory test is taken for asymptomatic testing as a precautionary measure given the potential for small cases of false positives. Extensive clinical evaluation shows lateral flow tests are accurate and sensitive. By using confirmatory testing, we can better assess the role and scope of LFD tests and help to further drive down the prevalence of the virus.</p>
<p>How do I get my LFD test result?</p>	<p>The LFD tests take 30 minutes or less and are point of care tests, so don't need to go to a lab to be processed. Your result will be sent to you via SMS and/or e-mail. Results will be communicated at longest within a day of the test.</p> <p>If your result is positive, you will be told to book a confirmatory test via gov.uk. You can also call 119 to book a test.</p>

Question	Response
<p>What should I do if I test positive with an LFD test?</p>	<p>After a positive LFD test result, you, and everyone you live with must self-isolate immediately for 10 days. Only leave home for your follow-up test. You will be asked to self-isolate and confirm this result via a confirmatory test. You should arrange your confirmatory PCR immediately.</p> <p>We carry out confirmatory testing to confirm diagnosis of COVID-19 before notifying someone that had a home test that they are legally obliged to self-isolate, but we strongly advise people who test positive – and other members of their household – to self-isolate pending the result of the confirmatory test.</p>
<p>How do I get a confirmatory test?</p>	<p>In your results SMS / email, you will be told to self-isolate and to book a PCR test to confirm your positive LFD test result. You must do so immediately. For the fastest result, we suggest you book a test at a test site at gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test. You can also book a home test online or call 119 to book a test.</p> <p>Individuals who test negative from their LFD test will not need to isolate or take a confirmatory test.</p>
<p>Why can't you automate this to make it easier / increase uptake?</p>	<p>Contact tracing will automatically be triggered by a positive LFD Test (carried out with a trained assistant present). If individuals take a PCR test within 2 days of their positive LFD Test and get a negative result, it will release them from self-isolation and tracing automatically. If the confirmatory PCR is not taken within 2 days then a negative result does not mean that the individual can stop self-isolating.</p>
<p>What is this 2 day cut off period?</p>	<p>In order for the confirmatory PCR to accurately reflect if a person's original positive LFD test is correct it must be taken within a short time frame, clinically advised as 2 days, of the LFD test. If the confirmatory PCR is taken outside of this 2 day window it is not seen to reflect the original LFD test result and will not result in release from self-isolation of the case or their contacts.</p>

Question	Response
<p>Will people who test positive on one of these rapid tests face fines if they do not self-isolate?</p>	<p>We strongly recommend people self-isolate from the receipt of a positive LFD (home) test result. Contact tracing will be triggered by a positive LFD test result (if carried out with a trained assistant present) and you have a legal duty to self-isolate. Contact tracing will be stopped automatically after receipt of a negative confirmatory PCR, if the PCR was taken within 2 days of the LFD test result.</p>
<p>Will people with a positive LFD test be eligible for the £500 self-isolation payment?</p>	<p>Individuals who have carried out a LFD test at an asymptomatic testing site through community testing or workplace testing will be able to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment (subject to eligibility criteria) after receipt of a positive LFD test result.</p>
<p>Does the LFD Test positive result feed through to the payments you can claim when isolating?</p>	<p>You will be eligible for the support payments you can claim when isolating following a positive LFD Test result from an assisted test.</p>
<p>When am I legally obligated to self-isolate?</p>	<p>We strongly recommend you self-isolate following a positive LFD (home) test result. Contact tracing will be triggered by a positive LFD test (carried out with a trained assistant present) result. You are legally obligated to self-isolate following a positive confirmatory PCR test result.</p>
<p>How will you know that those who had a positive lateral flow test will actually get a confirmatory test?</p>	<p>Confirmatory testing will confirm diagnosis of COVID-19 - we will strongly advise people who test positive with an LFD test – and other members of their household – to self-isolate according to government guidance pending the result of the confirmatory test.</p> <p>Anyone who tests positive, using any coronavirus test, should self-isolate along with their household immediately. Both PCR and LFD (carried out with a trained assistant present) positive test results will be traced immediately. Those who test negative will need to continue to follow all national guidance. Hands, Face, Space.</p>
<p>Will my contacts have to self-isolate if I test positive?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Question	Response
<p>What if I do not take a confirmatory test?</p>	<p>If you get a positive LFD (home) test result, you are recommended to self-isolate. If you take an assisted LFD test (carried out with a trained assistant present) you have a legal duty to self-isolate when you receive a positive LFD result. You and your contacts will be traced, and you will be able to apply for self-isolation payments.</p>
<p>Is it correct that if someone tests positive with an LFD Test but then does not order a confirmatory test, they will not have their contacts traced?</p>	<p>No. Our systems are aligned so a positive LFD (assisted) test will automatically launch contact tracing. You and your contacts will be traced, and you will be able to apply for self-isolation payments. When a positive result is delivered to an individual by SMS or email, they will also receive a message to take a confirmatory test at a test site, to book one online or by calling 119. You must self-isolate following a positive LFD Test result - only leave home for your confirmatory test.</p>
<p>What percentage of contacts might never be traced? / Is there not a risk that the true incidence of COVID-19 will not be known as it is not captured?</p>	<p>We continually work to ensure that we can trace the greatest number of contacts possible.</p>
<p>What is the process if the lateral flow and confirmatory result do not match? My LFD test was positive, but my confirmatory test was negative.</p>	<p>Although there is a very low risk of false positives for tests using lateral flow devices, they will occur in a small number of cases. If your confirmatory test is negative, it is very unlikely you have the virus – and you are safe to return to work / you do not need to self-isolate. Continue to follow all national guidance. Hands, Face, Space.</p>
<p>My LFD test was negative, but I chose to take a confirmatory test which was positive. What do I do?</p>	<p>This was probably because you did not have the virus - or a high enough viral load of the virus to be detected - when the LFD test was taken, but you will have become infected by the time the confirmatory test was taken. LFD tests detects the disease when you are most likely to infect others. You will need to abide by the latest government guidance on isolation from the date of the positive confirmatory test.</p>

Question	Response
<p>If I receive a positive LFD test, then a negative PCR will my contacts be informed?</p>	<p>Contacts who have been informed of your positive LFD Test and asked to self-isolate will be automatically contacted and informed they no longer need to self-isolate as long as you took your confirmatory PCR test within 2 days of your LFD Test result</p>
<p>When can one restart regular LFD testing after a positive LFD test result?</p>	<p>If a person has tested positive for COVID-19 using a PCR test, they will probably have developed some immunity to the disease. However, it cannot be guaranteed that everyone will develop immunity, or how long it will last. It is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection.</p> <p>Individuals who have tested positive by PCR should be exempt from routine re-testing by PCR or LFD Tests within a period of 90 days from their initial illness onset or test (if they have no symptoms) unless they develop new COVID-19 symptoms or are part of a programme of testing where this is explicitly agreed. This is because fragments of inactive virus can be persistently detected by PCR in respiratory tract samples following infection – long after a person has completed their isolation period and is no longer infectious.</p>
<p>What is the rationale for 2 days?</p>	<p>For the confirmatory PCR to accurately reflect if a person’s original LFD positive test is correct it must be taken within a short time frame. If the confirmatory PCR is taken outside of this window, it is not seen to reflect the original LFD result and will not result in release from self-isolation of contacts.</p>
<p>Does PCR reinstatement have any impact on tests at schools?</p>	<p>Yes. If you receive a positive LFD result you must book a PCR immediately and self-isolate. If you then receive a negative result from the PCR, and the PCR test was taken within 2 days of the LFD, then you and your contacts will be informed they can cease self-isolating.</p>
<p>How does PCR reinstatement impact care homes?</p>	<p>There is no impact to testing in care homes as currently care homes are taking confirmatory PCR tests.</p>

Question	Response
Will the initial LFD test result come through to Local Authorities via NHS T&T, and then will subsequent positive PCR's follow onto NHS T&T?	For individual's who take an assisted LFD test their result will come through via NHS T&T. Subsequent PCRs will also flow through. For self-reported LFD tests the confirmatory PCR test will flow through if positive.
Are any PCR's filtering through to Local Authorities after the 2 days?	Local Authorities can see both assisted LFDs and PCRs immediately.
Is there a legal requirement to get a PCR test? Does the LFD self-isolation message (txt/email) mean it is legally binding?	There is no legal requirement for a follow-up PCR test however it is strongly advised. You are legally-obliged to self-isolate if you receive a positive LFD test result and you had an assisted test.
Are negative self-reported LFD test results not required to be entered on NHS T&T?	The process for self-reported LFD test results does not change. Both positive and negative results should be entered on NHS T&T.
For non-assisted tests at schools, would this be classed as a home test or an assisted test?	A non-assisted test at a school would be classed as an assisted test because it is carried out in the school environment.
If a PCR test done is carried out at home, can it be rescinded? Or does it have to be a PCR test carried out at a test site?	If you have an assisted LFD test and receive a positive test result you can book a confirmatory PCR test at home or at a test site. As long as your follow-up PCR test is done within 2 days of the assisted LFD test and you receive a negative PCR test result then you can be rescinded, and your self-isolation period will end.
If the individual does not get a PCR within the 2 day window, should they be advised not to get a PCR? Or Should they be advised to get a PCR for tracing purposes?	We encourage all individuals who have a positive LFD test to get a follow-up PCR test to be able to carry out genomic sequencing for positive PCR tests. The government's roadmap sets out that controlling of variants of concerns is an essential part of cautiously easing lockdown restrictions in England and genomic sequencing allows us to identify these variants.

Question	Response
Will the website allow to individuals to book PCR's as currently these are only for symptomatic people? Can they specify that they've already had a positive LFD	Yes. The website will allow people to book a PCR test if they are asymptomatic. There is a pathway on the website which will allow them to specify that they are booking a PCR test because they have had a positive LFD.
Will the 2-day window extend the isolation period from 10 days to 12 days or more due to the follow-up PCR test being taken within the 2-day window?	The isolation period will not be extended. The isolation date will begin from the date of the positive LFD test result.