



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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To all MPs in England

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Dear Colleague,

Update on Daily Contact Testing

I am writing to update you on the steps we are taking to help alleviate the pressures on critical services where contacts have to self-isolate, as we continue to manage the pandemic.

As we learn to live with the virus, we will keep doing everything in our power to break chains of transmission and stop this virus in its tracks. When we proceeded with Step 4 of our Roadmap last week, returning those cherished freedoms we have long sought to get back, we set out how we would manage the virus in this next phase, including continuing to drive forward with our vaccine rollout, and retaining proportionate plans for testing, tracing and self-isolation to break chains of transmission.

As part of this, we are now ramping up daily contact testing – to help minimise the potential for disruption caused by rising cases, while keeping people protected.

We are prioritising the most crucial workplaces to which disruption would have detrimental impact on availability, integrity or delivery of essential services or impact on national security, defence or the functioning of the state, in line with the criteria also used for the Critical Worker Self-Isolation Scheme.

Following the results of an independent study of daily contact testing, daily contact testing will be rolled out to an initial group of critical workplaces, so that contacts who would otherwise be self-isolating can instead take daily tests at asymptomatic testing sites in the workplace. We announced last week that these sites would include the food sector, emergency services and the transport sector. The government has now agreed that this initial roll-out will cover a total of 2,000 critical workplaces, which – in addition to those sectors announced last week – will include sectors such as prisons, defence, waste collection and energy sectors.

We will get as many of these as possible up and running this week, building on the rapid deployment we have already delivered to some of the largest supermarket distribution centres.

Staff who are close contacts of a positive case outside their own household will have the option, instead of self-isolating, of taking a lateral flow test every day for up to 7 days. The test must be carried out at the workplace asymptomatic testing site. If their daily test is negative, it is highly likely they are not infectious and they may continue to attend work that day. They may also continue with essential daily activities and are asked to take additional measures to minimise risk, including avoiding visiting others indoors and avoiding being in poorly ventilated public places.

On days where they are not working and cannot complete a test at their workplace they will be required to self-isolate.

If staff test positive, or if they develop symptoms, they should self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test. Anyone who tests positive must self-isolate.

We have come so far in our fight against the virus, but it is not over. The vaccine continues to be the best form of defence against the virus, and it is highly effective at reducing the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation and death. Employers participating in daily contact testing will be strongly encouraged to support all their employees to get both doses of the jab.

As we in parliament start the summer recess back in our constituencies across the country, I ask for your support in this effort, by continuing to urge your constituents to get fully vaccinated.

Yours ever,



RT HON SAJID JAVID MP