**Testing Guidance**

The Government has scaled up the testing capacity, with the aim to provide testing for everyone over the age of 5 with Covid-19 symptoms. This should help to contain the virus and allow workers to return to work when it is safe to do so, ensuring continuation of vital work. This means that now all Highland Council staff can be tested and not just key-worker as per previous guidance.

Please note the information and process outlined below requires to be applied in an agile and flexible way to take account of any further national or local developments and circumstances.

**What the changes mean for workers in Scotland**

Access to Covid testing in Scotland has been widened and is now available to everyone from the age of 5. Highland Council has a process in place to support staff members needing to be tested.

When a member of staff needs to self -isolate because a household member has symptoms, the household member can complete a self-referral. The member of staff needs to share the outcome of the test with the line-manager.

**An individual must meet the following criteria to be tested:**

* Showing symptoms
* Have a valid ID when attending the testing centre
* Confirmation text/email regarding test appointment.

**Staff members who do not have symptoms**

The test is only guaranteed to be accurate if someone is symptomatic. Therefore, a-symptomatic individuals will not be tested.

[More detailed UK government guidance on the circumstances where a test is appropriate can be found here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance).

**When to get tested**

You should get tested in the first three days of coronavirus symptoms appearing, although testing is considered effective up until day five.

No testing will be undertaken after day five, unless it’s for a specific reason which will be agreed on a case by case basis.

**Test Centre Information**

The Inverness testing site is open 10.00-12.30 and 14.00-16.30pm each day, including weekends.

The individual must live within a 90-minute drive to the testing site and must be able to maintain household isolation during commute, which means that they cannot use public transport.

The testing site address is: Car Park 3, University of Highlands and Islands, Inverness IV3 5SQ

**Mobile testing units**

There are Mobile testing units in the NHS Highland area, in various pop up locations including Portree, Broadford, Fort William, Thurso, Ullapool, Kingussie, Dornoch, Oban and Dunoon. Although Oban and Dunoon are out with the Highlands, they can be used if this is closer for staff to travel. As these are pop up locations they change from week to week and are only open 2 days a week. If you are unable to attend a location then home test kits are also available.

**To refer Highland Council individuals to be COVID-19 tested, the following process must be followed:**

* If a member of staff notifies the Line Manager they have to self-isolate due to them displaying symptoms, the Manager should contact the HR helpdesk team (01349) 886610 or [corona.staff@highland.gov.uk](mailto:corona.staff@highland.gov.uk)
* The Manager should determine if the individual has completed a self-referral.
* The HR helpdesk team will then contact the individual and gather essential information. This information will be recorded on a spreadsheet and the HR Helpdesk will complete the referral process.
* HR will send a consent email to the individual regarding sharing the test results, the appointment date and location. Individuals need to bring this email and ID eg. Passport, Driving Licence and HC ID on the day of testing. If they don’t, they will be turned away, with no exceptions.
* If using the self-referring form, the Individual must notify the HR helpdesk team of the appointment date and time for updating the spreadsheet.
* The individual being tested will receive a text message with their results within 48 hours. In case of self-referral, the individual should inform their Line Manager and HR helpdesk team as soon as they receive their results.
* Once the results have been received HR helpdesk team will contact the individual/manager to discuss next steps – Negative result speak with your line manager about returning to work (Email line manager ensuring they complete a return to work interview and update My View). Positive Result – 7 days if symptoms have subsided for them 14 days for household members offering NHS telephone numbers and OH if required. Inconclusive test results – 7 days self-isolation with a view to return to work after this if feeling capable. (Line manager to complete return to work and update MyView)

**Test centres currently fall into two categories as follows:**

Assisted test sites (using ThermoFisher and MediWire kits) where a trained tester will take the swab from the subject through the car window

* Self-test sites (using Randox kit) where the individual completes the test themselves in their car and then hands the completed sample, in its packaging, to the site team on their way out – the subject registers their kit online on the Randox website
* Mixed test sites (using ThermoFisher and MediWire kit) – both assisted and self-test at the same site, where the subject is directed to one of these options by the site team

**Inverness is a Mixed test site.**

Testing of children under 18 years of age is only possible at these testing locations:

* Self-test sites; and
* Mixed sites (via the self-test option)

It is currently not possible to test children under 18 years of age at sites which only undertake assisted testing; however, it is the intention to roll-out self-testing and mixed-testing to all sites as soon as possible.

* + Under 18s may complete the test on themselves or with the help of an adult parent or guardian
  + All children under 12 years of age must be tested by a parent or guardian
  + It is not possible to use a test kit on a child under 5. If a child under the age of 5 has coronavirus symptoms, parents need to call 111.