

COVID TESTING SOLUTIONS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why Is Screening Staff Important?

Screening staff is critical, not only for the protection of your workforce, but also to contribute to the bigger public health picture. Screening helps, diagnose and contain infections in your workplace, but also helps the UK understand the ongoing spread and activity of coronavirus.

Providing mass initial screening for all your staff will help to rapidly isolate any potentially infective carriers which will prevent the harmful spread of the virus through the workforce and wider community that would otherwise lead to employee sickness and loss in productivity. Secondly, a company-wide screen is vital in assessing how many employees have already been exposed to the virus, and as such, could be deemed to return back to work without further screening. This, in turn, will help employers categorise employees for further testing, self-isolation, or potentially no need for further screening.

What Is an Antibody Test?

An antibody test is a blood test conducted to measure the body's response to the infection. When an individual is exposed to the virus, the body mounts an immune response over a number of weeks to generate antibodies for combating the virus. Once the infection is resolved, these antibodies will remain in the body as a "surveillance mechanism" in case the person is re-exposed to the virus, such that the infection can be cleared again before any harm or infectiousness can set in. These tests, which are sent to a UKAS and ISO accredited labs, are Public Health England (PHE) and MHRA approved for healthcare professional use.

Employers can use these tests to establish what percentage of their workforce have previously been exposed to the virus, and could now be considered for a safe return or continuation of work with a low risk of re-infection and spread.

What Is a PCR Test?

A PCR test uses a swab to collect secretions from the nose and throat of an individual. These secretions tend to harbour lots of virus particles if someone is infected. The swab can then be sent to Randox Labs, the leading UK PCR testing facility, where the virus particles can be extracted. A PCR test can then specifically measure active levels of the virus in an individual. These levels rise in the days leading to symptom onset, peak during the early stages of the symptoms and then gradually decline until they are often immeasurable after the 14 day self-isolation period.

Employers can use these tests to determine who is currently infected with the virus and to guide instruction to self-isolate. It can also be used to trace who else might have been subsequently infected. This test will not however identify if an employee has previously been exposed and now cleared the virus.

How Should I Initially Screen My Staff?

If possible, all staff should be screened at least 5 days before returning to work. This allows for all results to come back and decisions to be made. All staff should receive, initially, both a PCR (swab) and antibody (blood draw) test to determine their historic exposure to the virus and also their current infectivity status. Staff should be invited to a set location, potentially the workplace (one by one) or can drop into one of our UK clinics to have their sample collected. Results will be delivered to either the employee or direct to the employer, and any infected individuals will have the opportunity to discuss their result with a doctor.

What Result Indicates an Employee Can Return To Work?

Employees who have a positive antibody result, will have had previous exposure to the virus and have subsequently generated antibodies, could return to work given that they are unlikely to become re-infected or pass on the virus. These employees do not require regular screening after their initial screen.

Employees who have a positive PCR result and a positive or negative antibody test should speak to a Ghosh Medical Group doctor and self-isolate under their instruction. After 14 days, they should have another PCR test to ensure that they have now cleared the virus.

Employees who have both a negative PCR and antibody result have not likely been infected with the novel coronavirus. Whilst, they are unlikely to be currently infective, and can therefore return to work, they must be closely monitored for symptom development and regularly screened. If they develop symptoms they should take a PCR test and self-isolate.

How Should I Screen Staff Afterwards

Staff, who did not test positive on an antibody test in the initial screen, should be screened monthly by both PCR and antibody. This is vital for monitoring asymptomatic spread and growing the population of previously infected persons. These screens should be performed in the same way as the "initial screen".

Furthermore, any employees that become symptomatic at work should be immediately tested by PCR and then self-isolated for 14 days. Those employees should be tested by PCR and antibody after 14 days, 5 days before returning to work.

How Do I Book Screening For My Staff?

Simply call Ghosh Medical Group on 0333 200 3338 and explain that you wish to book a Corporate Screening Service. Ghosh Medical Group will then calculate how many PCR tests and antibody tests will be required and assess when and where you want samples collected. They will then be able to provide a price and book you in for the service with payment by card or bank transfer.

Is There A Minimum Order Quantity?

This service is applicable for companies with 1-100,000 employees. Prices will vary depending on the volume of testing required.

How Will You Receive Your Results?

All employee results will be emailed to a designated company official. This email will include test results, advice and certificates if applicable.

Who Are Randox?

Randox are a global biotechnology company enabling 5% of all diagnostic tests worldwide. Their UKAS accredited labs are currently the primary providers of PCR testing for the National Testing Programme. Their labs are based in County Antrim, Northern Ireland and currently process around 60,000 tests per day for the UK government, individuals and private companies. Their test platform is PHE accredited and proven to be 100% accurate.

Who Are Ghosh Medical Group?

Ghosh Medical Group are a leading UK based private medical company, providing high quality, CQC registered, safe, professional services to patients, focusing on the provision of non-NHS primary health services. They are clinical partners to Randox Health through the clinical delivery of Randox diagnostics and pathology to private users.

Who Is Collecting Our Samples?

All samples will be collected by healthcare professionals trained in coronavirus sample collection, and employed by a CQC registered healthcare provider.

How Long Does It Take To Receive Results?

Following receipt of your sample, there is an aim to provide your results within 72 hours of a laboratory receiving your sample. Delivery dates for test results are approximate only and Randox Laboratories Limited will not be held liable for any delay in delivery. Your results will likely be delivered earlier than the time indicated within this document.

How Does This Compare To Government and NHS Testing?

Randox will use the same testing platforms used in the National Testing Programme provided by the government and NHS. Randox is able to meet the testing demand of this service and has surplus capacity to provide private testing. This will not impact the delivery of either government funded testing or private testing. Antibody testing has been recently PHE approved and will be rolled out in due course by the government. This private service offers companies the opportunity to benefit from such testing before it is available to everyone.

Document produced by Randox Health for Liverpool Chamber of Commerce publication to members – June 2020.