



## 1. Purpose

**1.1** To reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading within Laurel Homecare Ltd by confirming whether staff or Clients are COVID-19 positive.

**1.2** To ensure that Laurel Homecare Ltd remains up to date with the swabbing process for COVID-19 and can support staff and Clients to complete this where necessary.

**1.3** This policy forms part of the COVID-19 hub and must be read alongside other policies and procedures, including:

- HS11 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and Procedure
- HS16 - Coronavirus Policy and Procedure
- CC34 - Infection Control Policy and Procedure

**1.4** To support Laurel Homecare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

| Key Question | Key Lines of Enquiry   |
|--------------|--|
| EFFECTIVE    | E5: How are people supported to live healthier lives, have access to healthcare services and receive ongoing healthcare support?               |
| SAFE         | S2: How are risks to people assessed and their safety monitored and managed so they are supported to stay safe and their freedom is respected? |
| SAFE         | S3: How does the service make sure that there are sufficient numbers of suitable staff to support people to stay safe and meet their needs?    |
| SAFE         | S5: How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?  |
| WELL-LED     | W5: How does the service work in partnership with other agencies?  |

**1.5** To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that {Laurel Homecare Ltd} is registered to provide:

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Coronavirus Act 2020



## 2. Scope

- 2.1** The following roles may be affected by this policy:
- All staff
- 2.2** The following Clients may be affected by this policy:
- Clients
- 2.3** The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:
- Family
  - Advocates
  - Representatives
  - Commissioners
  - External health professionals
  - Local Authority
  - NHS



## 3. Objectives

- 3.1** As the spread of the coronavirus is resulting in response requirements continually evolving, Laurel Homecare Ltd will ensure that it stays up to date with reliable sources of information and has the flexibility to respond when required.
- 3.2** Laurel Homecare Ltd will ensure that safe, effective COVID-19 testing procedures are in place with staff and Clients having information in an accessible format.



## 4. Policy

- 4.1** Laurel Homecare Ltd recognises that testing for COVID-19 continues to be an evolving situation and that it is an important factor in planning care delivery at Laurel Homecare Ltd. Swabbing is a process to test for whether a person is currently infected with COVID-19 and the tests are currently available for anyone who has symptoms.
- 4.2** Laurel Homecare Ltd will ensure that staff and Clients are aware of the testing process and are supported to complete it, where required.
- 4.3** Laurel Homecare Ltd also recognises that staff at Laurel Homecare Ltd are now eligible for weekly COVID-19 testing as per [government guidance](#) and will ensure that this is followed.



## 5. Procedure

### 5.1 Antigen Test

This test identifies if the person is currently infected with COVID-19. These are the tests that are widely available and are used within Laurel Homecare Ltd to monitor and clarify the health status of staff and Clients.

### 5.2 Antibody Test

This test identifies if a person has ever had COVID-19. It is not widely available yet but is being offered to NHS and care staff as well as people taking part in research. More information can be found [here](#).

### 5.3 Independently Applying for a COVID-19 Antigen Test

Any person with symptoms, however mild, can apply for a COVID-19 antigen test to ascertain if they currently have COVID-19.

This can be applied for via the [online](#) government test service.

[Instructions in alternative formats](#) can also be applied for; with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) able to send braille, audio or large print instructions.

### 5.4 Staff Antigen Testing

Care Workers at Laurel Homecare Ltd are entitled to have weekly tests. All tests are to be arranged and provided by Laurel Homecare Ltd following the latest process and guidance that can be accessed [here](#).

[Anyone working in adult social care](#) who is not part of regular testing at work, such as unpaid carers, can access twice-weekly COVID-19 testing.

For full details on the end-to-end testing process, join the Government's weekly webinars [here](#).

It is also important to note that many people with COVID-19 do not have a fever, while some people can have a fever that is not caused by an infection. Thermal scanners just pick up body surface temperature, and not true fever. Therefore, temperature checks using no-contact thermometers, e.g. forehead scanners, are not accurate for testing asymptomatic staff.

### 5.5 Rapid Lateral Flow Tests

Everyone in England is now eligible for free rapid lateral flow tests to be sent to their home. More information and how to order the tests can be found [here](#).

### 5.6 Application for COVID-19 Tests for Staff

An application can be made by Sarah Hall [here](#). To apply, you will need:

- The Unique Organisation Number (UON) received from NHS Test and Trace for Laurel Homecare Ltd
- The total number of Care Workers for testing

Sarah Hall will receive an email confirming when the tests will arrive and they must be completed as directed.

Tests kits must be ordered ahead of each 28 day testing cycle and distributed out to all Care Workers.

### 5.7 Consent to Tests

Consent must be gained from staff prior to the test being undertaken and also when registering the test kits after completion.

Where staff refuse to take a test, Sarah Hall will review the COVID-19 risks for Laurel Homecare Ltd in relation to testing and also try to understand the reasons why the member of staff is refusing to take a test. Sarah Hall will also refer to the suite of HR policies and procedures at Laurel Homecare Ltd for further information.

### 5.8 Preparation for Testing

Prior to receiving the test kits, staff should:

- Read the testing guidance for home care workers
- Watch the [instruction video for self-swabbing](#) relevant to the testing kit they have (i.e. nose only or throat and nose swab kit)
- Read the guidance included with the testing kit

Once received, ensure that any PCR test kits are used in date order. Any expired PCR testing kits must not be used as results will be classed as void.

### 5.9 After Testing

Once the test has been completed, staff should:

- Register the test after completion [here](#)
- Apply the pink pre-paid label to the delivery packaging and post the test in a Royal Mail priority box, at

least an hour before designated collection times. Details of priority boxes near you can be found [here](#)

- Where multiple tests have been completed the [record-keeping spreadsheet](#) should be completed. Staff will receive test results back via email or text message within 3 to 5 days and Sarah Hall should be informed of any positive results.

Where a positive result is received, the member of staff is not required to retest for 90 days and must follow self-isolation requirements.

Further testing for those who are negative should take place once every 7 days. Testing should be on the same day each week between a Thursday and Sunday.

#### **5.10 Employee Referrals**

The employer referral portal is now closed. Where staff are self-isolating, employers should refer them to the [self-referral portal](#) to register for a prioritised test. All essential workers will be prioritised for testing. A full list of essential workers can be found [here](#).

#### **5.11 Clients and Testing**

Those Clients who meet the government criteria and have applied to be tested, will only be supported by Care Workers with testing when instructed to do so by Sarah Hall. Care Workers must follow the process and ensure that the correct PPE is worn before the procedure is followed. Government guidance on the home test can be found [here](#).

HS11 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and Procedure at Laurel Homecare Ltd provides further information on the current PPE guidelines for staff.

Clients must inform Laurel Homecare Ltd of the test results and the Care Plan will be updated accordingly by Laurel Homecare Ltd.

#### **5.12 Testing for Patients and Discharge from Hospital into the Community**

All individuals admitted to hospital to receive care will be tested for COVID-19 and their COVID-19 status and care needs will be shared with Laurel Homecare Ltd upon release.

Some individuals with non-urgent needs, who do not meet the clinical criteria to reside in hospital, will be discharged home for their recovery period. Clients can be safely cared for at home by Laurel Homecare Ltd, regardless of their COVID status, if the [guidance on use of PPE](#) is correctly followed. For further information, refer to HS11 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and Procedure at Laurel Homecare Ltd.

Testing will not hold up a timely discharge as detailed in the [COVID-19 hospital discharge service requirements](#). Where a test has been performed in hospital, but the result is still awaited, the Client will be discharged as planned and, while the result is pending, Laurel Homecare Ltd will assume that the Client may be COVID-19 positive for a 10-day period and follow guidance on the correct use of PPE. Similarly, as set out in the [COVID-19 adult social care action plan](#), any Client being taken on by Laurel Homecare Ltd should be cared for within their home as possibly COVID-positive until a 10-day period has passed.

#### **5.13 Clients with Behaviour that Challenges**

A COVID-19 test can be uncomfortable and distressing and it is important to consider the effect this may have on Clients before it is carried out. Each Client must be assessed on an individual basis when they are being supported with a test as to the Care they require. Clients with dementia, behaviour that challenges and learning disabilities may be distressed by having a swab. Where staff are required to support a Client, they must:

- Ensure that the test is being carried out in the best interest of the Client
- Ensure the reason for testing is proportionate and is not going to cause undue distress or anxiety
- Not use restrictive intervention to enable the swab to be taken
- Reassure the Client
- Where possible, use a staff member that is experienced and understands the specific needs of the Client
- Guide them through the process, explaining each aspect in a way that they understand

Where it is not possible to swab a Client because swabbing will cause undue distress and there are concerns that they may have symptoms of COVID-19, the Client must be isolated and cared for on the assumption they are COVID-19 positive.

#### **5.14 Self-isolation Exemptions and Testing**

Where staff are fully vaccinated and identified as being a contact of a COVID-19 case, they are no longer required to self-isolate if they meet set criteria as detailed in HS16 - Coronavirus Policy and Procedure and

[government guidance](#).

Testing for COVID-19 forms part of this process and staff must:

- Only attend work after receiving a negative PCR test
- Undertake a daily lateral flow antigen test
- Where the staff member has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, they must complete daily lateral flow antigen tests only



## 6. Definitions

### 6.1 Swab Testing

- A swab test allows viruses to be detected. The swab looks similar to a cotton bud and must be rubbed over the required area to allow a sample to be collected for analysis

### 6.2 Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China. The virus was named 'severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2' (SARS-CoV-2). The disease it causes is called COVID-19



## Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- All staff conducting tests need to have appropriate training on the correct procedure to follow
- Testing has been introduced to support with confirming cases of COVID-19 and helping with the planning of the required support for Clients and staff
- Consent has to be sought from Clients and staff for the tests to be conducted



## Key Facts - People affected by the service

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- If you require support to complete a swab test, you must speak to Sarah Hall
- COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus and testing is important to identify if you are infected so that appropriate care and support can be provided
- Once you have received your test results, you must inform Sarah Hall



## Further Reading

As well as the information in the 'underpinning knowledge' section of the review sheet we recommend that you add to your understanding in this policy area by considering the following materials:

**UK Government - Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for anyone working in adult social care who is not part of regular testing at work and unpaid carers:**

[https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-personal-assistants?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=224d03ec-aeec-44e6-abc8-0f37843e346f&utm\\_content=immediately](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-personal-assistants?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=224d03ec-aeec-44e6-abc8-0f37843e346f&utm_content=immediately)

**NHS Test and Trace - COVID-19 Test Kit Packaging Label Example:**

[https://wiredplusimg.s3.amazonaws.com/Sx1iaZDJ/LABEL%20EXAMPLE%20TO%20PRINT.pdf?utm\\_campaign=ALL+ASC+%2B+MOJ+test+kit+expiry+information&utm\\_content=dhsc-mail.co.uk&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Department+of+Health+and+Social+Care&link\\_index=1](https://wiredplusimg.s3.amazonaws.com/Sx1iaZDJ/LABEL%20EXAMPLE%20TO%20PRINT.pdf?utm_campaign=ALL+ASC+%2B+MOJ+test+kit+expiry+information&utm_content=dhsc-mail.co.uk&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Department+of+Health+and+Social+Care&link_index=1)