

Strengthened Support Package Communications for workplaces

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1. Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS PACK

This pack is designed to support organisations in communicating with their workforce in a community that has a strengthened support package in place, following a rise in Variant of Concern cases locally. This may include targeted case finding operations in or near to these workplaces.

Areas where there is a rapid growth of the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant, have been offered a strengthened support package, due to the fast spread and the potential for increases in hospitalisation. The package in these areas includes Test and Trace measures, enhanced self-isolation support and guidance to take particular caution when meeting others outside of household or support bubbles. The aim of the strengthened support package is to slow the spread where possible, allowing time for increased vaccine uptake and the subsequent development of immunity amongst eligible populations, whilst carefully monitoring the number of cases, deaths and hospital admission signals.

This pack provides internal communications and HR leads with:

- Detailed background on the approaches taken both nationally and locally to suppress the spread of variants of concern;
- Examples of communications content for workplaces to cascade through their internal communications channels;
- Key messages to include in internal communications;

The materials in this pack should be used in conjunction with any advice given by your Local Authority, who would provide you with further information about the additional public health measures deployed in the area to monitor and help suppress a Variant of Concern.

If you have any queries about any content in this pack, or would like to discuss your communications approach, please contact the Testing Communications Team: masstestingcomms@dhsc.gov.uk

1.2 VARIANTS OF CONCERN

We will continue to see variants of COVID-19 emerge as the virus evolves, and we should expect to live with them for some time.

Variants of COVID-19 are classified as 'of concern', if there are signs that the variant could cause more harm, meaning that the variant could be more easily transmitted, or escape immunity from previous infection or vaccinations. It can take weeks of research to establish this in newly identified variants of concern, which is why immediate action is needed to contain the spread.

Where a Variant of Concern is identified in an area, the Government will work with the local Council to address the outbreak. This is called "surge testing". During surge testing, we may ask for people without symptoms to take regular PCR tests – these are different to the twice-weekly rapid LFD test many people are already taking. We can do genetic sequencing on PCR tests, which allows us to find new cases of the variants and helps us to stop the variants from spreading.

Approach:

- People living / working / learning in the area will be encouraged to take a PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms of Covid
 or not.
- People with symptoms should book a free test online or by phone
- Your local Council will tell you how to get a PCR test if you don't have symptoms: this could be from a local test site or someone could come to your door

The key actions are:

- · Get your PCR test
- Register your test to get your result
- Return your PCR test to a drop-off collection point and not by post
- · Self-isolate if you test positive
- Get vaccinated when it is your turn

1.3 STRENGTHENED SUPPORT OVERVIEW

Areas being offered a strengthened support package will have available a number of interventions, based on assessment of local need, among other things to drive vaccine uptake amongst eligible cohorts and strengthen testing operations. This may include additional surge testing, targeted marketing and other measures. This will also include additional public advice for those in communities where the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant are spreading fastest.

In these areas, wherever possible, people should try to:

- > meet outside rather than inside where possible
- > keep 2 metres apart from people that you don't live with (<u>unless you have formed a support bubble</u> with them), this includes friends and family you don't live with
- minimise travel in and out of affected areas

You should also:

- > Get tested twice a week for free and isolate if you are positive
- > Participate in surge testing if asked to by your local council
- > Continue to work from home if you can
- > Get vaccinated when you are offered it, and encourage others to do so as well
- > Refer to local health advice for your area

You should self-isolate immediately if you have <u>symptoms</u> or a <u>positive test result for COVID-19</u>. There is <u>financial support if you're off</u> work because of coronavirus.

1.4 STRENGTHENED SUPPORT PACKAGE

Areas offered **strengthened support packages** will be provided with a number of interventions, based on assessment of local need, to drive vaccine uptake amongst eligible cohorts and strengthen testing operations:

Strengthened support package (additional interventions)

Rapid Response Team deployed to support LA's to plan and coordinate their ground campaign, and the ability to call on nationally funded Military Aid to the Civil Authority (MACA)

- a. Supervised in-school testing
- b. Wastewater testing samples prioritised for sequencing, in and around areas with Strengthened Support Packages
- c. Specialist comms support to support increased awareness and focused engagement with disadvantaged groups
- d. Drive vaccine uptake across eligible cohorts by upweighting resources for operational delivery of the vaccine programme.
- e. Allow Directors of Public Health to recommend additional control measures in educational settings (particularly face coverings)
- f. Supporting spot checks to ensure workplaces are COVID-safe
- g. Gov.uk Guidance advising people living in these areas to take particular caution when meeting others outside of their household or support bubble and to minimise travel in and out of affected areas.

Current Responses to VOC clusters (standard regime):

- a. 'Surge testing', either around the cluster or the wider asymptomatic population
- b. Enhanced contact tracing for those linked to the cluster, and faster standard tracing for all cases in the area
- c. Enhanced monitoring (sequencing, assay) ensuring all samples are redirected to labs that can sequence/assay and are prioritised within the labs
- d. Local comms to encourage test uptake
- e. Reporting into a national incident management structure
- f. Expanded eligibility for self-isolation support



2. Communicating with your colleagues

2.1 COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES



• Limit spread of variants of concern by ensuring organisations and their workforce are compliant in following all of the public health guidance.



• Increase awareness and understanding around variants of concern so that organisations and their workforce are more likely to undertake proactive steps to suppress the spread.



 Provide reassurance for organisations and their workforce on the national and local measures taken to quickly identify and control spread of variants of concern, building confidence in Test and Trace services.

2.2 YOUR WORKPLACE RESPONSE (1/2)

Workplaces have a key role to play in supporting the response to a variant of concern being identified in or near to where you live or work, whether your organisation has already been taking part in the workplace testing programme or not.

If your workplace is in a community with a strengthened support package, <u>you should encourage colleagues to continue</u> to work from home if they can.

These are the pro-active steps that you can strongly encourage your colleagues to take:

- Get vaccinated
- **Get tested** even if you don't have symptoms and even if you have had one or two doses of the vaccine
- Self-isolate if positive and if eligible access the available financial support to help you do this
- Continue to work from home if you can
- Be cautious when meeting others who are not in your household
- Minimise travel

Additional PCR testing resources will be made available in your area, including mobile testing units and increased home testing kits. For the latest information on where surge testing is taking place, visit <a href="https://example.com/hereased/meta-surge-testing-new-model.com/hereased/meta-surge-testing-test

2.2 YOUR WORKPLACE RESPONSE (2/2)

As well as asking those who can work from home to continue doing so, we also ask that you encourage your colleagues to continue with frequent twice-weekly rapid testing.

- It has never been more important to take up the offer of frequent testing. Continue taking part in the <u>workplace testing</u> <u>programme</u> if you have registered to do so, and support your colleagues in twice-weekly rapid testing. Reinforce that this applies to colleagues working from home and attending work settings.
- Encourage colleagues to get tested regularly, whether symptomatic or not and regardless of whether they have received their first or both of their vaccinations.
- Encourage colleagues who display symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss of smell/taste or it has changed) to get a PCR test as soon as possible, and to self-isolate.
- Encourage colleagues to carry out their follow up confirmatory PCR test if they receive a positive LFD result. Colleagues who test positive following a PCR test must self-isolate immediately, preventing the spread of the virus.
- Colleagues who test positive following an LFD test must also self-isolate immediately, but also arrange a PCR test as soon as possible to confirm the result via the <u>online portal</u> or by calling 119.
- If your organisation operates in the hospitality industry, front line colleagues can support contact tracing and stop the spread of variants by promoting your venue's QR check in code.

2.3 COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR WORKFORCE

We have put together resources to support you in communicating with your workforce on what the presence of a local variant of concern means, and how colleagues can help minimise the spread.

Your organisation will also have its own policies and guidance, and support programmes in place.

We understand that you will have multiple internal communications channels to reach your colleagues. Below you will find examples for you to adapt and use across these channels, with links to additional resources and assets.

- Newsletter and/ or intranet article link to example
- Leadership emails/vlog link to example content here
- Leadership calls or town hall online briefings to all colleagues link to example script here
- Key messages to include in your communications link to key messages here
- Assets for posters, leaflets and digital screens link to PHE assets here

Many organisations have also engaged effectively with their workforce through using videos, for example videos of senior leaders showing how quick and easy it is to take rapid tests.

3. Templates

3.1 DRAFT CONTENT FOR NEWSLETTER OR INTRANET ARTICLE

ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN PLACE IN [INSERT AREA]

After rapid growth of the Covid-19 variant [INSERT VARIANT] in [INSERT AREA], there are now additional measures in place to help us stop the spread of the variant locally.

[INSERT HOW THIS RELATES TO WHERE WORKPLACE ARE LOCATED).

Working in partnership with NHS Test and Trace, every person living / working in [INSERT AREA] over the age of [INSERT AGE] is strongly encouraged to

- Get vaccinated
- > Get tested even if you don't have symptoms and even if you have had one or two doses of the vaccine
- > Self-isolate if positive and if eligible access the available financial support to help you do this
- > Continue to work from home if you can
- > Be cautious when meeting others who are not in your household
- Minimise travel

[INSERT INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO GET A TEST LOCALLY]

[INSERT NAME] Regional Director at Public Health England/UK Health Security Agency [INSERT REGION], said:

"The UK has one of the best genomic systems in the world which has allowed us to detect the variant [INSERT VARIANT] here in [INSERT AREA]. I urge everyone offered a test or a vaccine to take this up to help us suppress and control the spread of this variant. "The most important thing is that people continue to follow the guidance that is in place – limit your number of contacts, wash your hands regularly and thoroughly, keep your distance and cover your face. If you test positive by any method, you must isolate to stop the spread of the virus. If you have been in close contact with someone who tests positive you must also self-isolate."

[INSERT QUOTE FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM]

[INSERT DETAIL ON WORKPLACE TESTING WHERE APPLICABLE - AND ANY SUPPORT PROGRAMME OR RESOURCES COLLEAGUES CAN ACCESS]

3.2 DRAFT CONTENT FOR LEADERSHIP EMAIL / VLOG

Dear Colleague,

As you may be aware, [Local Authority name] has announced additional measures in place to help us stop the spread of the Covid-19 [insert variant name] in [insert area name]. As a result, we are asking all those who can work from home to do continue to do so.

We all want to return to a more normal way of life, but we must all act quickly and cautiously to stop the spread of the new variant in INSERT.

How you can play your part:

- Get vaccinated
- Get tested even if you don't have symptoms and even if you have had one or two doses of the vaccine
- > Self-isolate if positive and if eligible access the available financial support to help you do this
- Work from home if you can
- > Be cautious when meeting others who are not in your household
- Minimise travel

For more information please visit [PLEASE ADD YOUR LOCAL CALL TO ACTION, INCLUDING URL].

3.2 DRAFT CONTENT FOR LEADERSHIP EMAIL / VLOG (2/2)

If you test positive, have any symptoms, or are contact traced following contact with someone who tests positive, then you should self-isolate immediately in line with the guidance on GOV.UK.

The more cases of the variant we find, the better chance we have at suppressing it. Please help to keep our workplace safer by participating in the surge testing.

All colleagues should continue to follow national guidance, including 'hands, face, space, fresh air' and also continue to be encouraged to participate in twice-weekly asymptomatic testing.

For more information please visit [PLEASE ADD YOUR LOCAL CALL TO ACTION, INCLUDING URL].

3.3 DRAFT CONTENT FOR LEADERSHIP CALLS/BRIEFINGS SCRIPTS

Cases of INSERT are rising in INSERT. There are now additional measures in place to help us stop the spread of the variant.

We all want to return to a more normal way of life, but we must all act quickly and cautiously to stop the spread of the new variant in INSERT.

How you can play your part:

- Get vaccinated
- > Get tested even if you don't have symptoms and even if you have had one or two doses of the vaccine
- > Self-isolate if positive and if eligible access the available financial support to help you do this
- > Continue to work from home if you can
- > Be cautious when meeting others who are not in your household
- > Minimise travel

If we all take this action, we can help break the chains of transmission in INSERT.

INSERT LOCAL CALL TO ACTION

4. Resources to support internal communications

Strengthened Support Packages Resources

4.1 MARKETING ASSETS – GET TESTED

Surge testing for new variant assets (posters, flyers and social) have now been developed and are available here: Resources - Coronavirus Resource centre (phe.gov.uk)

Posters (A3/A4), leaflets (A5), social assets available in two variations.

You will need to insert your own call to action with a URL and information on where to get a test:

GET TESTED:

"2021.05.11_Variant_Gettested_May_" (published May 2021)

These assets are available as editable PDFs – all Local Authorities should be able to co-brand, insert a postcode and insert their localised call to action without the need for editing software.





Translations of v. April 2021 posters are available in:

Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi (India), Punjabi (Pakistan), Romanian, Slovak, Somali, Sylheti, Urdu, Welsh
Translations - Variants of Concern - Coronavirus Resource centre (phe.gov.uk)

4.2 PROMOTING KIT REGISTRATION

It is important that individuals taking a PCR test in a community with a strengthened support package in place register to receive their results.

When someone does not register to receive their results, we are unable to alert the individual to their result and cannot commence contact tracing or other interventions. This means that infectious people (including those infected with a Variant of Concern) may be spreading the virus in the community.

To help minimise the potential for unregistered PCR test kits, please do use the following assets to promote kit registration locally.

Assets (including a leaflet, poster / signage) to support this are available here: <u>Variants of Concern - Coronavirus Resource centre (phe.gov.uk)</u>

The following translations are available upon request and will be uploaded on the PHE resources centre in due course:

- Arabic, Italian, Polish, Somali, Urdu
- Link to translations: <u>Translations Variants of Concern Coronavirus Resource centre</u> (phe.gov.uk)



4.3 RETURNING HOME TEST KITS

It is really important that employees taking their PCR tests at home are aware of the appropriate channels to return their kits to a designated drop-off collection point and not by post.

Please arrange printing out the sticker below and instruct staff responsible for distributing home test kits in your organisations to label up each test kit before distributing to employees.



The high res generic and editable versions of the sticker are available here:

Resources - Coronavirus Resource centre (phe.gov.uk)

Regular LFD testing resources

4.4 REGULAR TWICE WEEKLY TESTING ASSETS

- Different professions featured
- A3/A4 posters with localisable CTA and logo
- A5 leaflets
- Social static assets in 4 sizes
- FAQs for employees
- Key messages
- Example internal comms: employee letter, email sign off
- User guide and instructional videos on how to take a test
- Animation video on how LFD testing works
- Case studies (individuals/businesses) who are using LFDs successfully



















<u>Download resources: Workplace Testing - Coronavirus Resource centre (phe.gov.uk)</u>

4.5 HOSPITALITY, PERSONAL CARE AND NON-ESSENTIAL RETAIL

- Different professions featured
- A3/A4 posters with localisable CTA and logo
- A5 leaflets
- Social static assets in 4 sizes.











<u>Download resources: Workplace Testing - Coronavirus Resource centre</u>
(phe.gov.uk)

4.6 SOCIAL STATICS IN 4 SIZES – 14 PROFESSION VARIATIONS



1 x 1



4 x 5



16 x 9

CORONAVIRUS

and can spread it without knowing.

ALIMWAR, RETAIL ASSISTANT

"Now we can help protect

and our families at work."

our families at home -

Around 1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 don't have any symptoms

NHS Test and Trace

REGULAR TESTING FOR SAFER WORKING IS HERE



4.7 TRANSLATIONS















Welsh











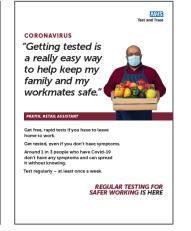


Punjabi India Polish Punjabi Pakistan Romanian Slovak Urdu

4.8 ADDITIONAL FORMATS AVAILABLE FOR PRINT AND DIGITAL









Easy print white

Editable digital asset

<u>Download resources: Workplace Testing -</u> <u>Coronavirus Resource centre (phe.gov.uk)</u>

4.9 AVAILABLE SUPPORT VIA THE PORTALS

Instructional assets

- A3/A4 assisted test poster
- A3/A4 self-test poster
- A4 flyer 'Before you test'
- LFD explainer 13 languages





5. Trace and App

5.1 TRACE: NHS COVID-19 APP

- It is more important than ever before that everyone downloads and uses the NHS COVID-19 app.
- The app is the fastest and most convenient way to find out if you have been near other app users who test positive.
- The NHS COVID-19 app is available for download from the App Store and Google Play Store. For help with downloading please visit:
- Get help downloading the app NHS COVID-19 app support
 NHS.UK
- The NHS COVID-19 app support website NHS.UK







Remember:





Bluetooth





Contact Tracing





Check in to venues/ leave contact details





Update to the latest version





Protection for yourself and loved ones



5.2 WHAT IS SELF ISOLATION AND CONTACT TRACING?

- Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result should stay at home and self-isolate immediately. This is because you could pass the infection on to others, even if you don't have symptoms.
- You may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the <u>NHS Test and Trace Support</u> <u>Payment scheme</u> if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate or you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been told to self-isolate.
- This guidance still applies even if you have received one or more doses of COVID-19 vaccine.
- It may be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others in their household but please follow this guidance the best you can.
- Contact tracers will get in touch with you to identify people you have been in close contact with recently who may also be infected with the virus. Please be honest and open with them. They are there to help, not judge.

6. Accessibility considerations: Targeting underrepresented groups

6.1 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

1

Communication activity should be planned specifically for digitally excluded employees; so we get better at reaching them:

- Consider increasing physical signposting through traditional and printed media and ensuring these are targeted and multi-language
- Leveraging existing company-wide groups

2

The rationale and the importance of regular testing must be clearly communicated, as:

- Digitally-excluded employees are unlikely to do weekly testing unless formally requested through other channels
- The difference between symptomatic and asymptomatic testing is confusing to employees
- · Employees need to know how they are going to get tested and what this will involve

3

In addition, digitally excluded employees are often also vulnerable and need additional assurance around:

The assistance provided in going through the testing process, the reliability of the test and effectiveness of self-testing

7. Appendix

7.1 HOW TO ACCESS REGULAR TWICE - WEEKLY LFD TESTING

We want to make it as easy as possible for everyone in society to access testing, and take-up the offer of twice-weekly rapid testing. The following routes are available, depending on individual circumstances.

➤ Workplace Testing – 1000's of employers registered to enable access to free tests until the end of June. The testing includes test sites, where you can take a supervised test and also workplace collect, where employees can pick up a box of tests to be taken at home. If an employer offers workplace testing, this is still the best route for individuals to access rapid testing.

If an employer has not registered for workplace testing, the following routes are available to all employees:

- > Community Testing All Local Authorities are offering local community testing sites, where you can go and take a supervised test. Most Local Authorities also offer a community collect option, where you can pick up a box of tests to use at home. A full list of sites can be <u>found here</u>.
- ➤ NHS Test and Trace sites Regional and Local Test Sites are situated across the country, with the majority of sites operating a collection model. On a morning, sites will conduct symptomatic PCR testing, but will provide an LFD collect service on an afternoon.
- ➤ **Pharmacy Collect** Thousands of pharmacies across England have signed up to offer Pharmacy Collect. You can go into a participating pharmacy and pick up a free box of tests to use at home. NHS England's site finder allows users to search for <u>nearby pharmacies</u> who offer this service.
- ➤ **Education** Secondary and college students are already being given tests to use at home twice a week, throughout term-time and the holidays.
- ➤ **LFD Direct** For people who can't access tests through the above routes, you can order a box of tests online or via 119, which will be delivered to your home.

Get in touch

For questions about anything in this guidebook or to discuss your communications plans please get in touch: masstestingcomms@dhsc.gov.uk