# Essex County Council lateral flow testing (LFT)

# For Early Years and Childcare Providers

# Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

## What is a lateral flow test?

A lateral flow test (LFT) allows people who have no COVID-19 symptoms to find out if they are infected. It's a rapid test and you can get a result within 30 minutes. This is different from a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test which needs to be processed in a lab and takes longer to get the result.

## Why am I being asked to do a test?

We are now offering regular testing to Early Years Providers in Essex. We believe that this is the only way to keep our staff, workplaces and customers safe, and to catch those asymptomatic (no symptom) cases which can unknowingly spread the virus.

Regular testing, along with adhering to government guidance, will reduce the transmission rates.

## How often do I need to book a test?

We would like employees to get tested twice a week.

You do not need to take the test if you are off work for any reason, this includes holiday and sickness.

## How do I get tested?

1. Create an account on the [Essex County Council website booking system](https://commisceo-pcs.shiftpartner.com/sign-up) (run by partner Commisceo)
2. Complete the details and select ‘Early Years Provider’
3. You’ll then receive a confirmation email to [log in with your user name and password](https://commisceo-pcs.shiftpartner.com/sign-in) and book your test

You’ll then be offered a choice of location, date, and time.

If you’re not able to book online, you can book via:

* email: booking.confirmation@nhs.net
* phone: 0333 772 6144

(Lines are open from 8am to 8pm, every day including Saturday and Sunday)

## Where are the test centres?

Essex County Council has set up test centres in all districts across Essex. You can choose the most convenient site to take your test. See the [full list of locations](https://www.essex.gov.uk/getting-tested-for-covid-19/if-you-dont-have-symptoms).

Please be aware that some sites do not have parking, so you’ll need to check before you go.

Note: The booking system will only show test sites in Essex. If you live outside of Essex, then you will need to choose the nearest and most convenient site.

## Can I claim for travel to the test centre?

Check with your employer if you can claim back expenses.

## Can members of my household also book a test?

Yes, these tests are for everyone who lives and works in Essex.

## Should I do the tests if I’ve had coronavirus in the past?

Yes, but only if it is 90 days since your last positive PCR result. Please also refer to the ‘What happens if I test positive?’ section below.

## What should I bring with me?

Please bring a face covering (unless you are exempt) and a wifi-enabled electronic device to [download the NHS COVID-19 app](https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/?utm_campaign=App_Launch_England&utm_medium=paid_social&utm_source=Google&utm_content=PPC&gclid=CjwKCAiAl4WABhAJEiwATUnEF5sQmMAIxXaGzZ5NfGdGJbPfxu_cy6qHBjgWB4nN4bs_9pRw1vCG4hoCs3IQAvD_BwE), if you haven't done so already.

Please note: Contact tracing can be paused in the app in certain situations. See [How and when should I pause contact tracing? · COVID-19 app support](https://faq.covid19.nhs.uk/article/KA-01100/en-us)

You may also wish to bring a bottle of water for after the test.

## How will I get my result?

After your test, you can leave the test site. You will receive a text message with your result shortly after the test.

You will need to upload your result onto the NHS COVID-19 app under the ‘Enter test results’ option on the main screen.

## What happens if I test positive?

If your result is positive, you must:

* inform your employer and follow the instructions given by them for reporting absence
* you and your household will also need to self-isolate immediately and follow the [NHS guidelines](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/) Members of your household can [book a PCR test online](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) on gov.uk if they wish.

Following your isolation period, and once you are symptom free, you can return to work as normal. You should not take another test for **90 days** (this is including your isolation period), unless you develop symptoms or are exposed to COVID-19.

Please note: If you develop symptoms after your isolation period, and within 90 days, then you should refer to [NHS guidance online](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/), self-isolate and take another PCR test.

## Where can I get support if I test positive and I need to self-isolate?

Speak to your employer about this.

Visit Essex County Council’s website for [support if you are self-isolating](https://www.essex.gov.uk/support-if-you-are-self-isolating).

## What happens if my LFT is negative?

If your test result is negative you can continue working following the [NHS social distancing guidelines](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/social-distancing/what-you-need-to-do/) or specific guidance given by your employer.

## What happens if my test is negative, but I have coronavirus symptoms?

If, at any time, you have coronavirus symptoms please refer to [NHS guidance online](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/) as you will need to book a PCR test and self-isolate.

## Should I continue testing after I've had the vaccine?

Yes, continue to test even if you’ve had the vaccine.

## Is the testing mandatory?

No, testing is not mandatory, however we would encourage all our staff to participate to help stop the spread.

## I'm on annual leave, off work sick with something other than COVID-19 or isolating, as I am named as a contact. How frequently should I get tested when not in work?

You do **not** need to test if on annual leave, self-isolating, or not in work. You should start testing again just prior to recommencing work.

## Who should I contact if I need support with the LFT booking system?

You can call the Commisceo helpline on 0333 772 6144.