

Guide for Care Home Staff on Testing

Croydon Public Health

27/05/20

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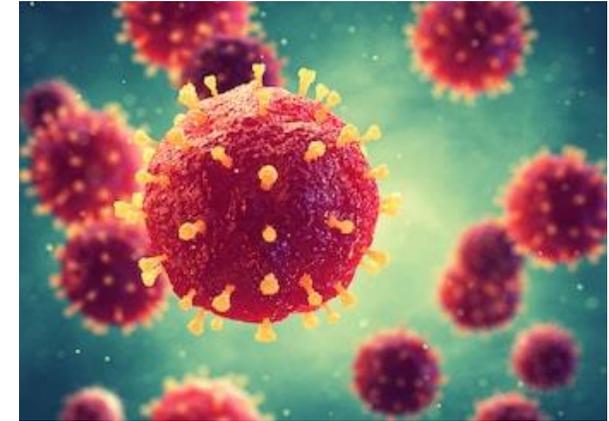
Introduction

In line with national guidance and best practice, mass testing is now available to all care homes in Croydon.

This test currently available is an antigen test that looks for the presence of genetic material from the COVID-19 virus within a swab or saliva sample.

Testing will help staff know whether they are safe to go to work.

Wide testing can also help the health service plan for extra demand, and inform government decisions around social distancing and lockdowns.



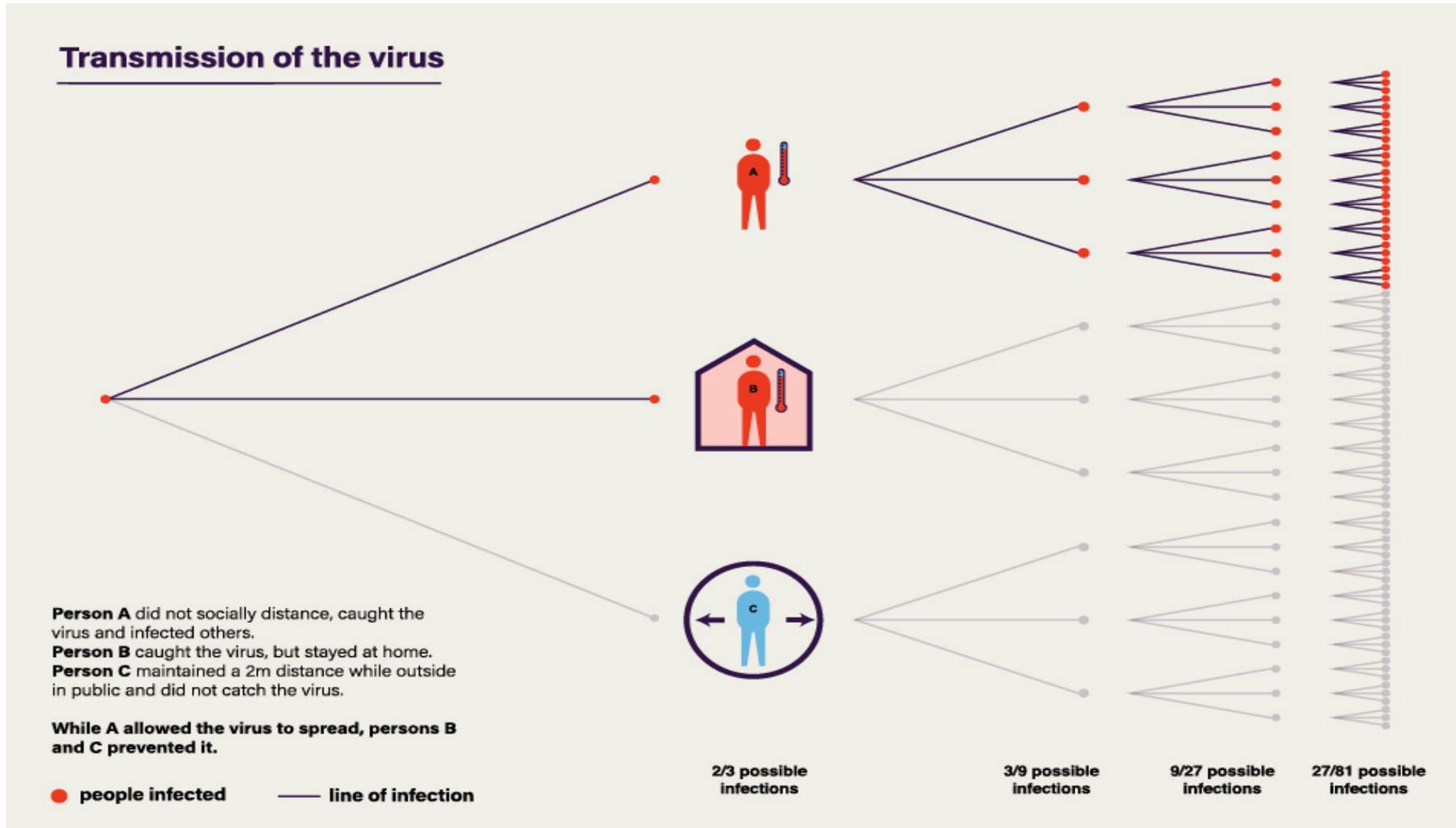
Why is testing important?

- At present, people who live with someone who has symptoms of Covid-19 need to self-isolate for 14 days in case they have contracted the disease. By testing the person with symptoms and the household contacts it may be possible to end the self-isolation period **allowing care home staff to return to work** if they do not have Covid-19.
- Testing helps care homes to make decisions about how they can **prevent the spread**, for example, a care home with no symptomatic residents or staff and negative test results may decide to 'lockdown' to prevent coronavirus from entering the home.
- Testing for Covid-19 also helps us **understand the spread** of the virus in the population to inform national strategies for dealing with the pandemic.

Why is testing important?

- As lockdown restrictions are lifted, testing allows us to understand where there may **be hotspots of infection** so we can quickly put in measures to prevent the spread.
- Many people with Covid-19 do not have symptoms or their symptoms are very mild. They may therefore, **spread the disease without knowing they have it**. By being tested we can ensure that the person with Covid-19 isolates and that people they have come into contact with isolate as well to prevent onward transmission.

Interrupting transmission – why testing is important



Source: [Cabinet Office guidance 26 May 2020](#)

Who can be tested?

- Essential workers with or without symptoms or people who are symptomatic and live with an essential worker via <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>
- Members of the public who have symptoms over the age of 5 via www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

What is NHS test and trace?

- On the 28 May 20, the Government rolled out the national test and trace programme.
- Members of the general public who are symptomatic and who are not essential workers can access a test [here](#)
- People who test positive will be contacted by the national contact tracing team.
- They will identify if anyone you have been in contact with may be at risk.
- Those at risk will be contacted and told what they need to do next.

Actions for care home staff with symptoms or self isolating

Health care workers and others working in health and social care settings should follow [this guidance](#)

Staff MUST remain off work if:

- They have symptoms; OR
- Someone in their home has symptoms

Staff with symptoms must remain off work for 7 days.

- Must have improved before returning to work
- Must have been fever free for the last 48 hours without medication – if not continue self isolation until fever free for 48 hours

Staff with someone unwell in their household must remain off work for 14 days:

- If a staff member develops symptoms during their 14 day isolation they only need to self-isolate for 7 days from onset of symptoms
- This may mean they finish before or after the 14 day period

How to access testing?

Care home workers with or without symptoms can access testing via:

- The self-referral route

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#self-referral>

Care home employers can access testing on behalf of their staff via:

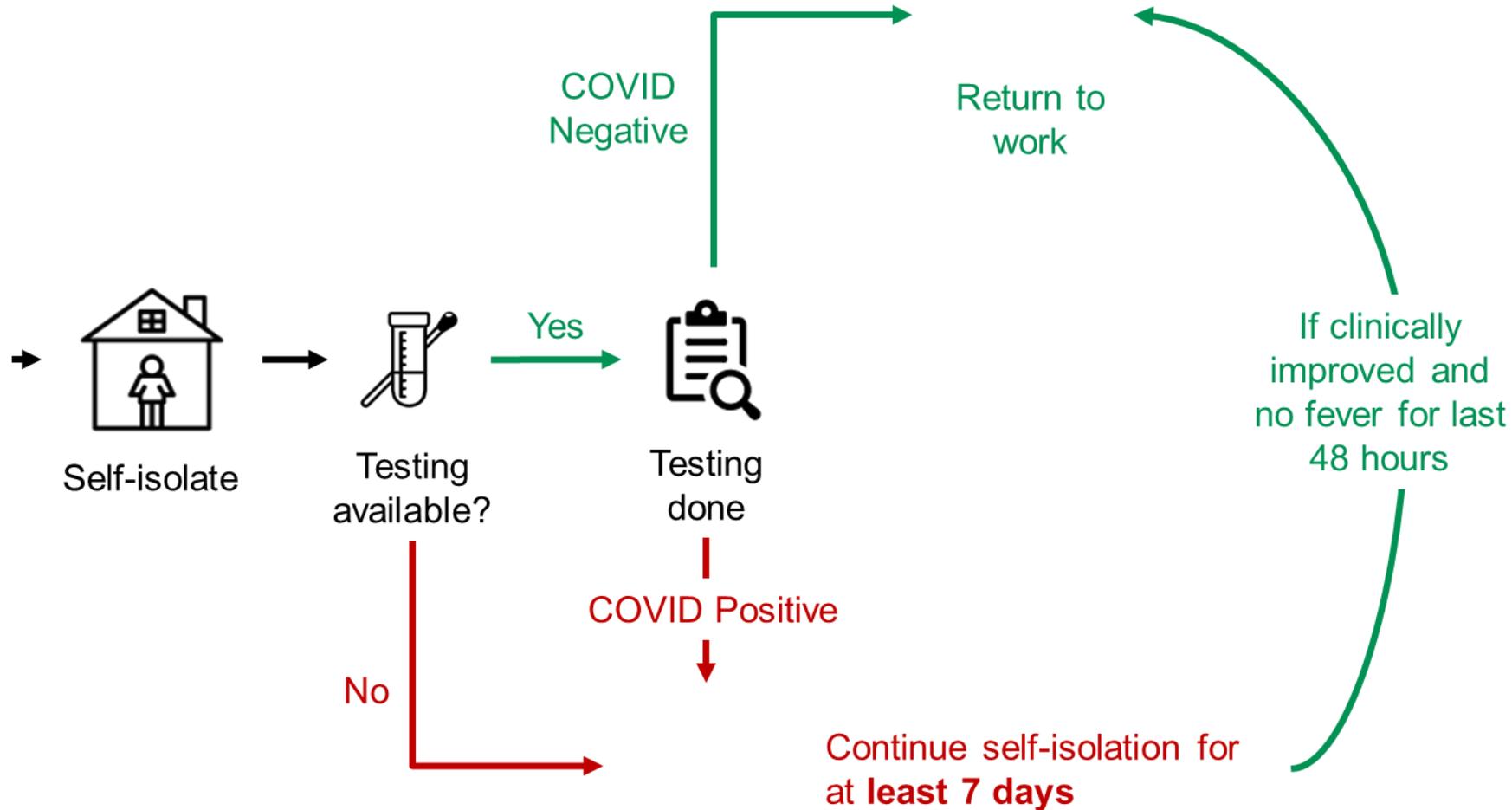
- The employer referral portal

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#employer-referral>

Where can I access testing?

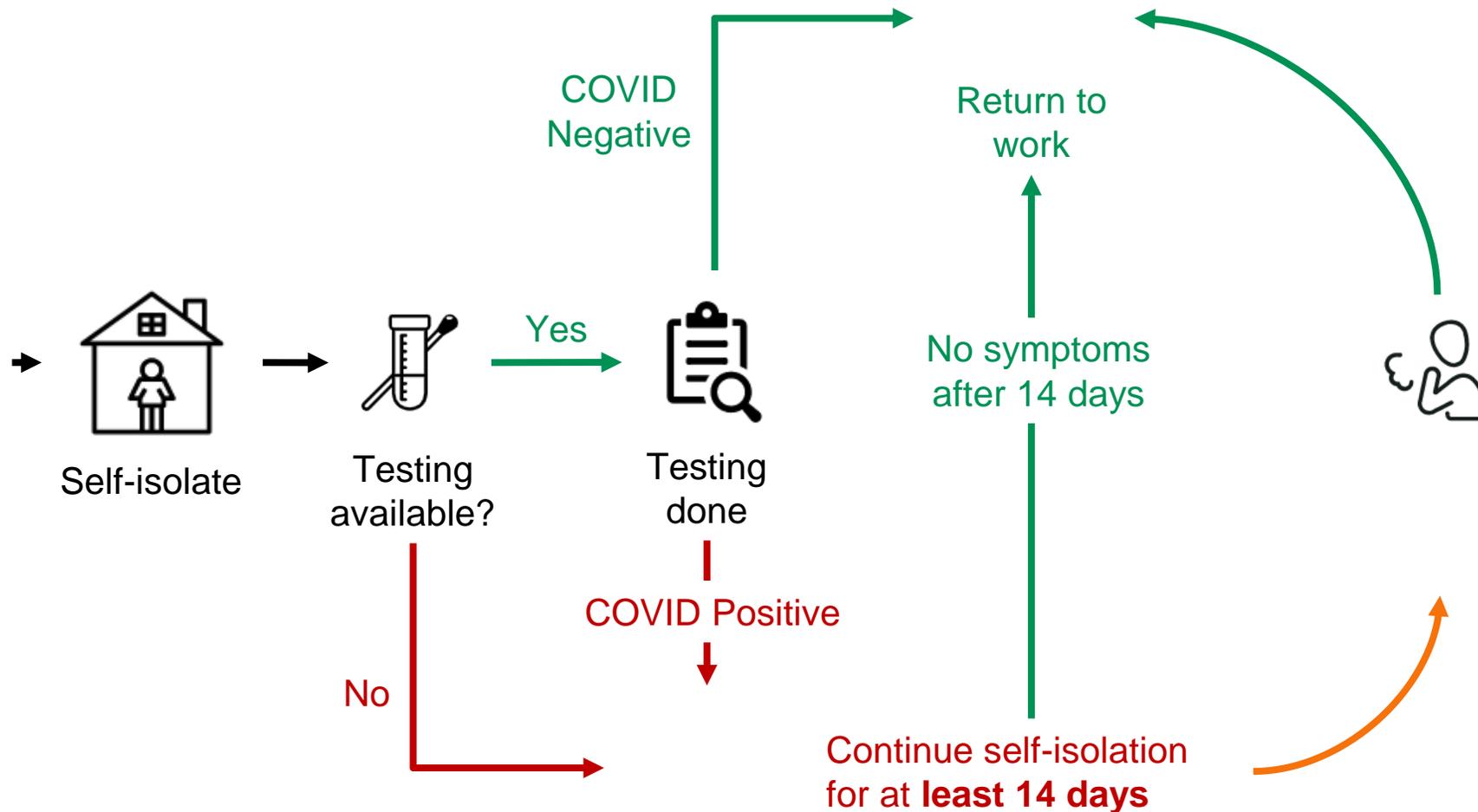
- drive-through regional testing sites (Gatwick and Chessington)
- mobile testing units (e.g. Fairfield Halls)
- test kits delivered to your home
- hospital-based testing for NHS patients and staff
- dedicated testing centres in other care settings

Staff member with symptoms



Source: IPC training April 2020: PHE London working with ADPH London

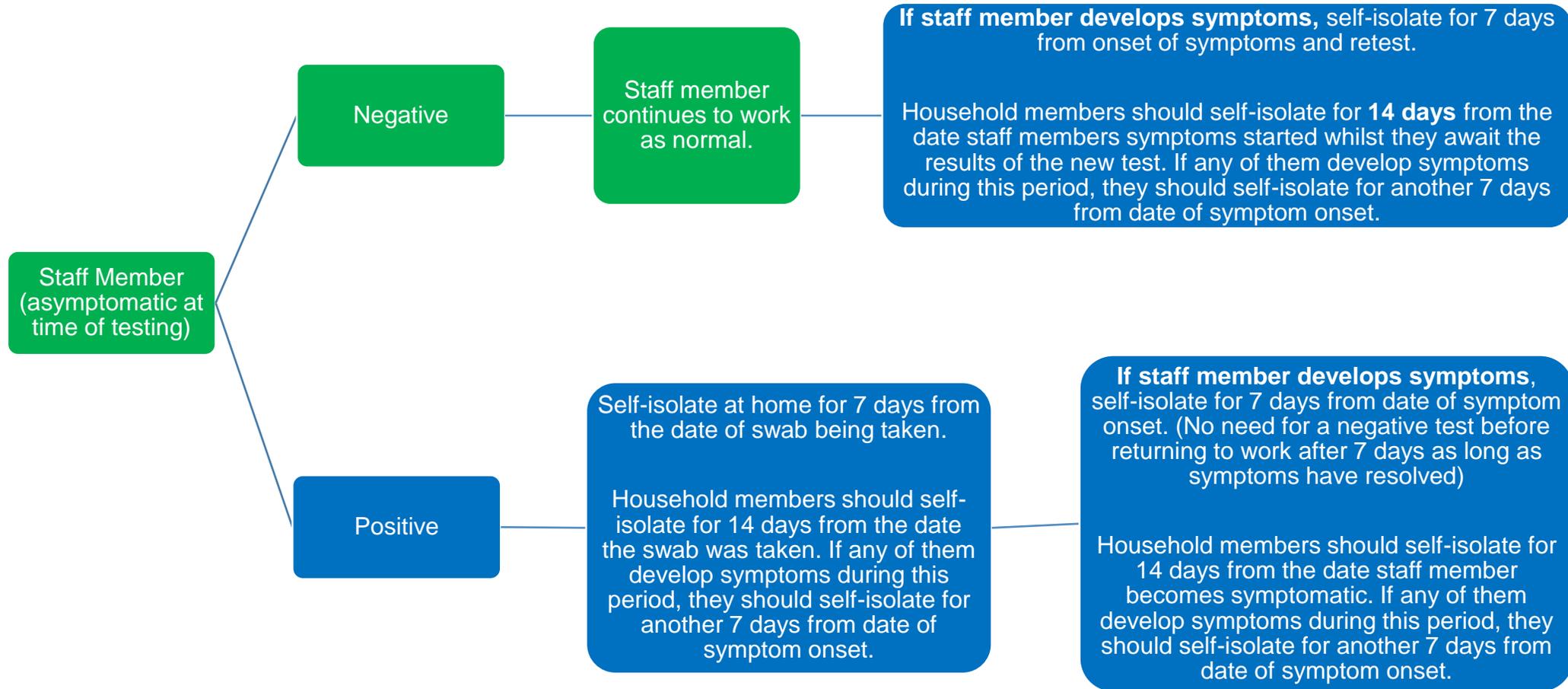
Symptoms in household of staff member



Source: IPC training April 2020: PHE London working with ADPH London

Actions for staff after receiving test results

Staff members should follow national [Stay at home guidance](#)



Testing for residents

- Care home managers can apply for testing for all residents with or without symptoms
- If you suspect your care home has a new coronavirus outbreak or it has been 28 days or longer since your last case and you have new cases, you should contact the LCRC
- If your care home looks after older people (over 65 years) or people with dementia you can access tests here:
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-care-home>

The testing process

- The test involves taking a swab of the nose and the back of the throat, which can be done by the person themselves (self-administered) or by someone else (assisted).
- The test can take up to several days to get a result.
- A positive test shows that the person being tested has a current COVID-19 virus infection.

More guidance on what to do after test results are received

Full guidance can be found on government websites listed below:

- **Details on testing eligibility and how care home staff can access testing is available on:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>
- NHS advice on self-isolation <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms/>
- Government's advice on Coronavirus (COVID-19): admission and care of people in care homes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-admission-and-care-of-people-in-care-homes>
- Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>