

Pharmacy Team briefing on the LFD service

This Community Pharmacy England Briefing provides information for pharmacy teams on the NHS Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests supply service for patients potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatments (the LFD service).

Background

- The NHS offers COVID-19 treatment to people with COVID-19 who are at risk of becoming seriously ill.
- To access treatment, eligible patients first need to be able to test themselves by using a lateral flow device (LFD) test if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.
- It is therefore important that they have LFD tests at their home in advance of developing symptoms, so they can promptly undertake a test.
- The LFD service was introduced to provide eligible patients with access to LFD tests.

Objective of the service

The objective of this service is to offer eligible at-risk patients access to LFD tests to enable testing at home for COVID-19, when they have symptoms of infection.

Wherever possible, eligible patients should obtain LFD tests via the service **in advance of developing symptoms**.

A positive LFD test result will be used to inform a clinical assessment to determine whether the patient is suitable for and will benefit from NICE recommended COVID-19 treatments.

Brief overview

- Pharmacy owners must have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in place for this service and all pharmacy staff involved in the provision of the service must be familiar with and adhere to the SOP.
- LFD tests should be purchased from wholesalers.

- The service can be provided by an appropriately trained member of the pharmacy team; however, pharmacy staff may need to refer the patient/representative to the pharmacist or pharmacy technician if they are uncertain if the patient is eligible to receive the LFD test kit.
- The service is only available for patients aged 12 years and over who are part of the potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatment cohort (as detailed in NICE guideline [Supporting information on risk factors for progression to severe COVID-19](#)) and from 1st April 2024, the additional patient cohorts who have been included (as detailed in [NICE guidance recommendations](#)) as part of an expansion to access of COVID-19 treatments.
- The patient's eligibility for a supply of free LFD tests needs to be confirmed before making a supply. Patients may present with a letter from the NHS which confirms their eligibility, or the pharmacist, or pharmacy technician, may need to check, for example, by using the National Care Records Service, to see if the patient has a condition which makes them eligible to receive LFD tests.
- One box of 5 LFD tests should be supplied free of charge to an eligible patient. No other pack size or quantity should be supplied.
- If there are no boxes of 5 LFD tests in stock, a member of staff should find another neighbouring pharmacy that offers the service and has stock and signpost the patient/representative to that pharmacy.
- There is no specific advice that must be provided to the patient. However, patient information does need to be obtained before a supply is made (and the patient's representative's details if they are collecting on behalf of the patient) as well as other information on the supply of the LFD tests – see our data collection form for the full details which is available, along with other resources, at: cpe.org.uk/lfid.
- If a patient tests positive, they are advised to call their general practice, NHS 111 or hospital specialist as soon as possible. The test result will be used to inform a clinical assessment to determine whether the patient is suitable for and will benefit from NICE recommended COVID-19 treatments.