

Changes to who can get free COVID-19 Lateral Flow Device test kits under the NHS

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) – the organisation that decides what treatments are affordable for the NHS – has updated its guidance on the use of antiviral treatments when people are infected with COVID-19.

The guidance only suggests people that are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 should get the treatments.

They have updated their guidance after the manufacturer of one of the COVID-19 treatments increased its price. That made NICE change their mind on which people should get treatment if they catch COVID-19. This change is because the new higher price of the medicine makes it less cost effective and NICE have to consider whether money spent by the NHS is value for money for taxpayers.

This change in who can get COVID-19 treatments also means the people that can get free COVID-19 lateral flow device (LFD) test kits under the NHS has to change to match the NICE guidance.

NHS England has changed the rules on which patients can get free LFD test kits from pharmacies and the following groups of people are now not able to get the tests:

- People aged 85 years and over
- People with end-stage heart failure who have a long-term ventricular assistance device
- People on the organ transplant waiting list
- People living in a care home who are aged 70 years and over
- People living in a care home who have a BMI of 35 kg/m² or more
- People living in a care home who have diabetes
- People living in a care home who have heart failure
- People currently in a hospital who are aged 70 years and over
- People currently in a hospital who have a BMI of 35 kg/m² or more
- People currently in a hospital who have diabetes
- People currently in a hospital who have heart failure

If you want to talk to NHS England about this change, you can contact them:

- By post: NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT
- By email: england.contactus@nhs.net
- By telephone: **0300 311 22 33**