

Repeat Testing of Staff and Residents who have previously Tested Positive

Clarification has been sought and received from public health England regarding the guidance contained in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings> which says:

Staff who have previously tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 by PCR should be exempt from re-testing within a period of 6 weeks from their initial illness onset, unless they develop new symptoms, in which case they will need retesting.

*If staff are tested by PCR after 6 weeks from their initial illness onset and are **still found to be positive for SARS-CoV-2, this could be due to a persistently positive test associated with the original infection, rather than a new infection as fragments of inactive virus can remain for some time following infection.** If they have developed new possible COVID-19 symptoms after 6 weeks, they would need to self-isolate again. If, however, they are asymptomatic, further management should be discussed with an infection specialist (for example a specialist in microbiology, virology or infectious diseases) before a decision is made regarding another self-isolation period.*

PHE have confirmed that the same applies to residents in care homes and further guidance confirming this is expected soon.