

To: Regional Director Public Health and  
Primary Care  
ICB Chief Pharmacist/ Director of  
Medicines and Pharmacy  
ICB Medical Director

NHS England  
Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
London  
SE1 8UG

cc. Regional Chief Pharmacist  
Regional Senior Pharmacy  
Integration Lead  
Community Pharmacy Contractors

14 March 2024

Dear Colleague,

## **Community Pharmacy NHS Lateral flow device (LFD) tests supply advanced service for patients potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatments.**

### **Service Expansion**

The NHS offers COVID-19 treatment to people with COVID-19 who are at risk of becoming seriously ill. From 1 April 2024, as a result of updated NICE guidance, the number of people estimated to be potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatments through routine NHS access pathways will increase to around 5.3million.

NICE recommendations have been updated to include:

- 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 aged 70 years and over, or who have a BMI of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more, diabetes or heart failure, and:
  - are resident in a care home, or
  - are already hospitalised.

These patients are subsequently eligible for free NHS LFD tests. Eligible patients can obtain a free box of 5 LFD tests from a participating community pharmacy, on confirmation that the patient is part of the cohort which is potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatments. A positive LFD result will be used by the prescriber to inform clinical assessment to determine whether the patient will benefit from COVID-19 treatments.

The full list of eligible patients who are at risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, and therefore, are potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatments, can be found in [NICE recommendations for COVID-19 Community Treatments: Supporting information on risk factors for progression to severe COVID-19](#).



Access to COVID-19 community-based treatment will continue to be based on a confirmed COVID-19 infection, achieved with a diagnostic LFD test, in line with some of the recommended treatment's product licences.

## **NHS Service Finder**

It is expected that the LFD Test Supply Service will be listed on the NHS service finder located on [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) from July 2024. We will inform you when this has been completed.

## **Testing and test outcomes**

Patients will have been advised to take an LFD test as soon as possible if they have any symptoms of COVID-19, even if their symptoms are mild. Patients are advised to only use a test if they have symptoms.

If a patient tests positive, they have been advised to call their general practice, NHS 111 or hospital specialist as soon as possible.

If a patient tests negative, but still has symptoms of COVID-19, they have been advised to take a total of three LFD tests over three consecutive days. If any of the tests are positive, they should stop testing and contact their general practice, NHS111 or hospital specialist as soon as possible. Full information can be found here: [Treatments for COVID-19](#)

## **Funding**

Pharmacy contractors providing this service will be paid according to arrangements set out within the Drug Tariff. This will include a fee of £4.00 (plus VAT) for each supply to an eligible patient or patient representative. The cost of tests supplied will be paid according to arrangements set out in the [Drug Tariff](#).

## **Registration and record management**

This is an advanced service where community pharmacy contractors will need to register via NHSBSA's MYS portal in order to provide the service.

The pharmacy contractor must maintain appropriate records of the supply of an LFD test kit. Full details of the service and reporting requirements can be found in the service specification here: [NHS lateral flow device tests supply service for patients potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatments \(england.nhs.uk\)](#). If you have any further queries, please contact the NHS England community pharmacy inbox: [england.communitypharmacy@nhs.net](mailto:england.communitypharmacy@nhs.net)

Yours sincerely

Anne Joshua  
Deputy Director of Pharmacy Commissioning  
(Head of Pharmacy Integration)

