**For immediate release**

# Latest testing advice for Somerset residents

Somerset’s Public Health leaders are advising people to retest if they are still displaying Covid-19 symptoms after receiving a negative PCR test result. The advice follows today’s national announcement regarding the suspension of a laboratory processing Covid-19 PCR tests.

In recent weeks there have been concerns around a number of people receiving negative PCR test results after they have previously tested positive on a Lateral Flow Device (LFD).

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), formerly Public Health England, today released a statement to announce that [testing of PCR samples at Immensa Health Clinic Ltd in Wolverhampton has been suspended following NHS Test and Trace investigation](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fukhsa-newsroom.prgloo.com%2Fnews%2Ftesting-at-private-lab-suspended-following-nhs-test-and-trace-investigation&data=04%7C01%7CLZRogers%40somerset.gov.uk%7Ce9ee510dd4d64e7eb8dc08d98fad29ab%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637698796165704820%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=3x27CiW1WdKjBM7cAGw1JmId5X3c%2FO4ugvA8k0AkvZg%3D&reserved=0).

UKHSA say that while investigations are underway into the precise cause, NHS Test and Trace estimate that around 400,000 samples have been processed through the lab since September. The vast majority of which will have been negative results, but an estimated 43,000 people may have been given incorrect negative PCR test results between 8 September and 12 October, mostly in the South West of England.

For those cases that were some time ago there is no need for further action.

NHS Test and Trace is however contacting the people who were tested more recently and could still be infectious to advise them to take another PCR test. Close contacts who are symptomatic will also be advised to take a PCR test in line with normal practice.  Anyone with Covid-19 symptoms should book a PCR test. Those with a positive LFD test should also get a follow up PCR test to confirm they have Covid-19.

This has been confirmed as an isolated incident attributed to one laboratory and all samples taken after 12 October are now being redirected to other laboratories.

Professor Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health for Somerset County Council, said: “This is an unfortunate incident that will have affected a significant number of PCR test results across the South West. At present, we are being advised that NHS Test and Trace will be in touch with people that could still be infectious to advise them to take another test.

“However, if you are in any doubt at all about yourself or a loved one still displaying symptoms and tested before 13 October, please retest using either a home PCR testing kit or by getting a PCR test at one of the local testing sites.”

Councillor Clare Paul, Cabinet Member for Education and Public Health, said: “People should feel reassured that there are no technical issues with the LFD or PCR test kits themselves and no issues at any testing sites; people should continue to test as normal. All other labs are working normally.

“Our advice remains, if you are showing any symptoms of Covid-19 or have a positive LFD test please stay at home and self-isolate for ten days to avoid infecting others and get a confirmatory PCR test within 48 hours.”

If you will lose income by completing the self-isolation process or staying at home looking after a child who is self-isolating, you can apply for a support payment by visiting: [Claiming financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme)

UKHSA’s full Statement can be viewed here: [Testing at private lab suspended following NHS Test and Trace investigation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/testing-at-private-lab-suspended-following-nhs-test-and-trace-investigation)

If you are concerned about how this might affect you or your family, please call the Somerset County Council Covid-19 support line on 0300 790 6275 or visit [Get help (somerset.gov.uk)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/get-help/)

**Ends**

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