**NHS TEST AND TRACE**  
**NEW WORKPLACE GUIDANCE**

**Introduction**

On 27 May 2020 the Department of Health and Social Care published guidance on the NHS test and trace programme for Employers, business and workers.

This guidance explains how employers and businesses can play their part in the NHS test and trace programme to slow the spread of the virus, protect the health and care system and save lives. The guidance should be used in conjunction with the Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) information which has been updated to include details on test and trace.

**Test and Trace - Process**

Test and trace will provide testing for anyone, over the age of 5 years old, displaying symptoms of the coronavirus (i.e. new persistent cough, high temperature, sudden loss of taste/smell). If someone tests positive they will be contacted by the NHS to help trace their recent close contacts (defined in the guidance as contact within the 48 hour period before the onset of symptoms). An alert is then sent to those contacts who will be notified of the need, where necessary, to self-isolate (for 14 days) to help stop the spread of the virus.

However, when someone first develops symptoms and orders a test, they are encouraged, in the first instance, to alert anyone they have had recent close contact with. If any of those close contacts are co-workers, the person who has developed symptoms may wish to ask their employer to alert co-workers. In doing so, the employer should observe the requirement to protect the personal information of the affected employee(s).

**Role of Employer**

Employers have a vital role to play and are asked:

- to make sure their workplaces are as safe as possible;
- to encourage workers to heed any notification to self-isolate;
- to communicate with, and support, workers when in isolation (such as, allowing people to work from home, if they remain well, and if it is practicable to do so or finding alternative work that can be completed at home).

At all times, employers must follow the Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance mentioned above to minimise the risk of a spread of infection in the workplace.
The guidance also encourages employers to:

➢ make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option.
➢ where working from home isn’t possible, identifying sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace.
➢ keep the workplace clean, maintaining safe working separation, and prevent transmission through unnecessary touching of potentially contaminated surfaces.
➢ carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment if they have not already done so. The Health and Safety Executive has published [guidance on how to conduct a risk assessment](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/risk-assessment.html). A BESA template is also available [here](https://www.thebesa.com).

**Statutory Sick Pay**

If working from home is **not** reasonably practicable, employers must ensure self-isolating employees receive sick pay and give them the option to use their paid leave days if they prefer. Employees are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for every day they are in isolation, as long as they meet the eligibility conditions.

The NHS test and trace service will provide a notification that can be used as evidence that someone has been told to self-isolate.

*Note: A new NHS COVID-19 app that will form a component part of the NHS test and trace service is currently being trialled on the Isle of Wight and will be rolled out nationally in due course.*

**BESA Employment Affairs** will issue further information when this becomes available. Meanwhile, please visit the COVID-19 hub at [www.thebesa.com](https://www.thebesa.com) or contact employment.affairs@thebesa.com for further information.