

Information for providers interested in entering the domestic LFD market

Introduction

The Universal Testing Offer (UTO) was launched in April 2021, providing free Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs) via GOV.UK, Pharmacy Collect, and some community test sites. In the COVID-19 Response Autumn and Winter plan 2021, the Government committed to ending universal free provision of LFDs for asymptomatic testing. As the UTO is scaled down, we expect the private sector to scale up so that individuals who wish to test on a discretionary basis to manage personal risk can purchase tests.

As part of the Living with Covid Strategy, on 21 February 2022, the PM announced the end of the UTO on 1 April.

Government testing advice

Throughout the pandemic, government advice and information has been informed by the best scientific evidence available from health agencies, academics, and experts.

People will continue to be advised that there are safer behaviours they can adopt to reduce the risk of infection, including taking a test if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

Further advice can be found at: [COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19)

Validation of tests

All antigen and molecular based testing devices need to be approved for sale by UKHSA. They must be listed on either the CTDA COVID-19 test validation approved products, or the Medical Devices Regulations 2002 protocols. These lists are updated regularly, and it is up to providers to ensure that the tests they sell are validated for use in the UK. More information on validation, including a list of tests currently approved can be found at:

[COVID-19 test validation approved products - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-test-validation-approved-products)

Minimum standards for providers

Providers of COVID-19 testing must meet certain minimum standards set by Government, and must complete a declaration stating that their tests meet these standards. These standards are likely to be updated in advance of April 1 to ensure that they are appropriate for the domestic private market for self use LFDs. More details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/minimum-standards-for-private-sector-providers-of-covid-19-testing>

Test pricing

Test providers will of course have autonomy to set their own prices. However, we expect that providers will charge fair prices and not take advantage of consumers' desire to manage their own risk.

Fair usage policy in the UTO

Until 1st April people will still be able to order test kits through the UTO. However, we have set ordering limits to limit the risk of stockpiling and will not hesitate to take further measures if necessary.