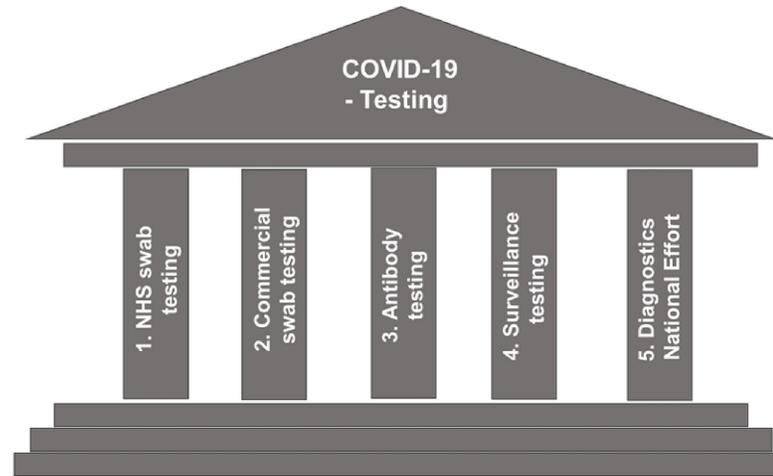


The government is working with the best minds in science, industry and logistics across the world to scale up our testing capacity. Our strategy has 5 pillars.



### **Pillar 1: Scaling up NHS swab testing for those with a medical need and, where possible, the most critical key workers**

This type of testing allows the NHS to identify and effectively care for those who are most seriously ill – saving lives by helping clinicians decide the most effective treatment options. These swab tests are largely delivered through Public Health England’s

regional laboratory network and, since the beginning of March, NHS laboratories across the country.

Since the crisis began, we have conducted around 200,000 tests across the UK and over the last fortnight the number of tests done by Public Health England and the NHS has doubled from 5,000 a day to 10,000 a day, by scaling up our lab capacity, boosted by additional trained staff and securing improved access to key supplies, consumables and staff. This puts us ahead of most other European countries at this stage of the outbreak.

But we need to go further, as fast as possible. Public Health England and NHS England / Improvement are committed to increasing their capacity to 25,000 swab tests per day by the end of April, including through a public and private partnership with Roche to bring on line new testing capability that uses their high-throughput real-time PCR machines. The first partnership went live last weekend, based primarily in the NHS, with more sites coming on stream each week during the course of April. We also want to see the UK getting its fair share of proprietary test kits to deliver the full capability that we are making available. The first call on these will be for this pillar.

In line with our strategy, the majority of this testing has been for those with a medical need – for example, identifying coronavirus sufferers amongst the most unwell people in hospital to allow clinicians to separate them from other vulnerable patients and provide the best possible clinical care; or for investigating specific outbreaks.

Within these numbers, some critical NHS key workers in these hospitals have already been tested for COVID-19, where there has been spare capacity based on the decision of local trusts. As capacity increases, it is now possible to also ramp up the volume of critical staff testing. This week, as NHS trusts had created further additional capacity, NHS England instructed that any spare capacity can be focused on testing critical key workers, prioritising those who are in household quarantine because a member of their household is symptomatic, allowing them to return to work as soon as possible if the test is negative.

Further details on swab testing NHS staff, and other critical key workers, is set out in the next pillar, which will add to our capacity in this area of testing.