



[Home](#) > [Health and wellbeing during COVID-19](#)

Oral statement to Parliament

## Coronavirus (COVID-19): Health Secretary's statement to Parliament

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock updated Parliament on the government's response to coronavirus.

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From:

[Department of Health and Social Care \(/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care\)](#) and [The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP \(/government/people/matthew-hancock\)](#)

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First, we are protecting the nation's care homes with a further £600 million available directly to care homes in England and we've prioritised testing for care homes throughout and we've made sure every care home has a named NHS clinical lead and we're requiring local authorities to conduct daily reviews of the situation on the ground, so that every care home gets the support it needs each and every day.

All of this amounts to an unprecedented level of scrutiny and support for the social care system, and a level of integration with the NHS that is long overdue.

Second Mr Speaker, the 4 UK Chief Medical Officers have today updated the case definition to include a new symptom.

Throughout this pandemic, we've said that if you develop a new, continuous cough or a fever then you should immediately self-isolate.

From today we are including anosmia, which means that if you've lost your sense of smell or are experiencing a change in your normal sense of smell or taste, that can be a symptom of coronavirus, even where the other symptoms are not present.

So from today, if you develop a continuous cough or fever or anosmia, you should immediately self-isolate for at least 7 days, in line with the guidelines.

Members of your household should self-isolate for 14 days.

By updating the case definition in line with the latest science, we can more easily recognise the presence of the virus and more effectively fight it.

Third Mr Speaker, we are expanding eligibility for testing further than ever before.

Over the past 6 weeks, this country has taken a small, specialised diagnostics industry and scaled it, at breath-taking pace, into a global champion.

Yesterday Mr Speaker we conducted 100,678 tests.

Every day we are creating more capacity. That means more people can be tested and the virus has fewer places to hide.

Today I can announce to the House that everyone aged 5 and over with symptoms is now eligible for a test.

That applies right across the UK in all 4 nations from now.

Anyone with a new continuous cough, a high temperature or the loss or change of sense of taste or smell can book a test by visiting [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/).  
(<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>)

If you're eligible for a test and you don't have internet access you can call 119 in England, Wales and Scotland, or 0300 303 2713 if you're in Northern Ireland.

We will continue to prioritise access to tests for NHS and social care, patients, residents and staff and as testing ramps up towards our new goal of total capacity