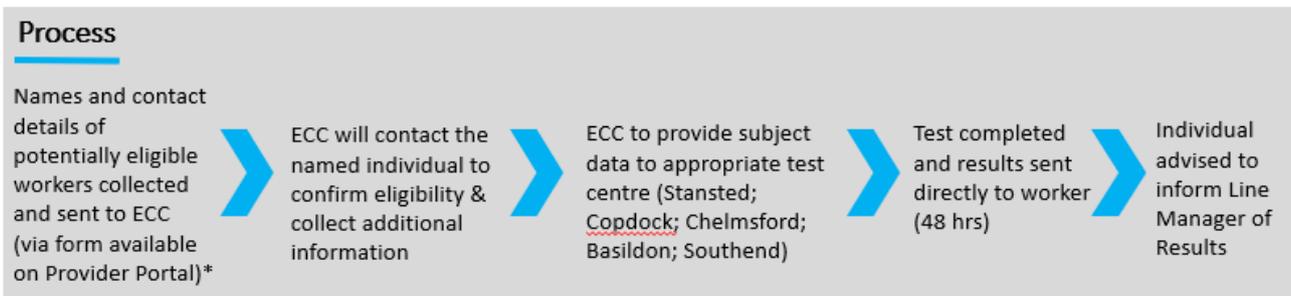


Testing - Process

The Government announcement yesterday that **all key workers can now access free Covid-19 tests**, either via drive-thru national centres or home test kits. We wanted to confirm with you the new process.

Please ensure that you have **considered the advice from the Director for Public Health about the risks of a test resulting in a “false negative”** and how to remove the risk of reintroducing an infectious key worker into an environment where they are working with a vulnerable person. You should also **consult the Return to Work flowchart** before allowing someone to return to work after testing.

To be clear, the local Essex test sites - Wren House (Chelmsford), Phoenix House (Basildon) and The Lighthouse (Southend) - are not available through the national scheme, but you are still able to book a test at these sites via [our online form](#). These are drive-thru locations only. The Process is:



*Only staff members that meet the Eligibility outlined will be considered for testing

The government scheme offers access to national drive-through locations (including Copdock and Stansted) as well as **home testing kits**. We know many of you have advised your staff are unable to get to the drive-thru locations, so this is welcome option.

Access the national test centres:

- [Guidance on getting tested](#)
- Essential workers who are self-isolating can [book a test directly](#) (*We are aware the site has received large volumes and temporarily closed due to demand*)
- Employer referral – employers can refer on behalf of employees. In order to obtain a login, employers of essential workers should email portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk with 2 email addresses that will primarily be used to load essential worker contact details.

Essex County Council
Place & Public Health
E3, County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1LX



Our Ref: Covidcarehome
Date: 24 April 2020

Dear Colleague

Re Criteria for Safe return to work in Care Homes

In the light of the continuing challenge of care home Covid-19 outbreaks, I am writing to seek your support in taking a very robust approach to protecting residents by ensuring that there is no possibility that workers returning to duty who have had symptoms or have been isolating might still be infectious.

This is important as staff testing is conducted. The test is not perfect and around 1 in 50 who test negative will in fact be positive and infectious. There is also some doubt whether all who test positive will be infection free after 7 days, with the World Health Organisation (WHO) now recommending 14 days.

I feel strongly given the huge challenge of outbreaks in care homes we too should work on this assumption.

I would therefore ask that you please consider managing staff returns to work and testing in line with the appended flow chart. This will mean longer exclusion in some cases but will minimise risk to residents.

We are working with PHE, the CCGs and our own teams to think how else we can work together to reduce risk of outbreak in care homes and I will hopefully contact you again around what more we can do together.

Thank you for your help in this matter

Best wishes

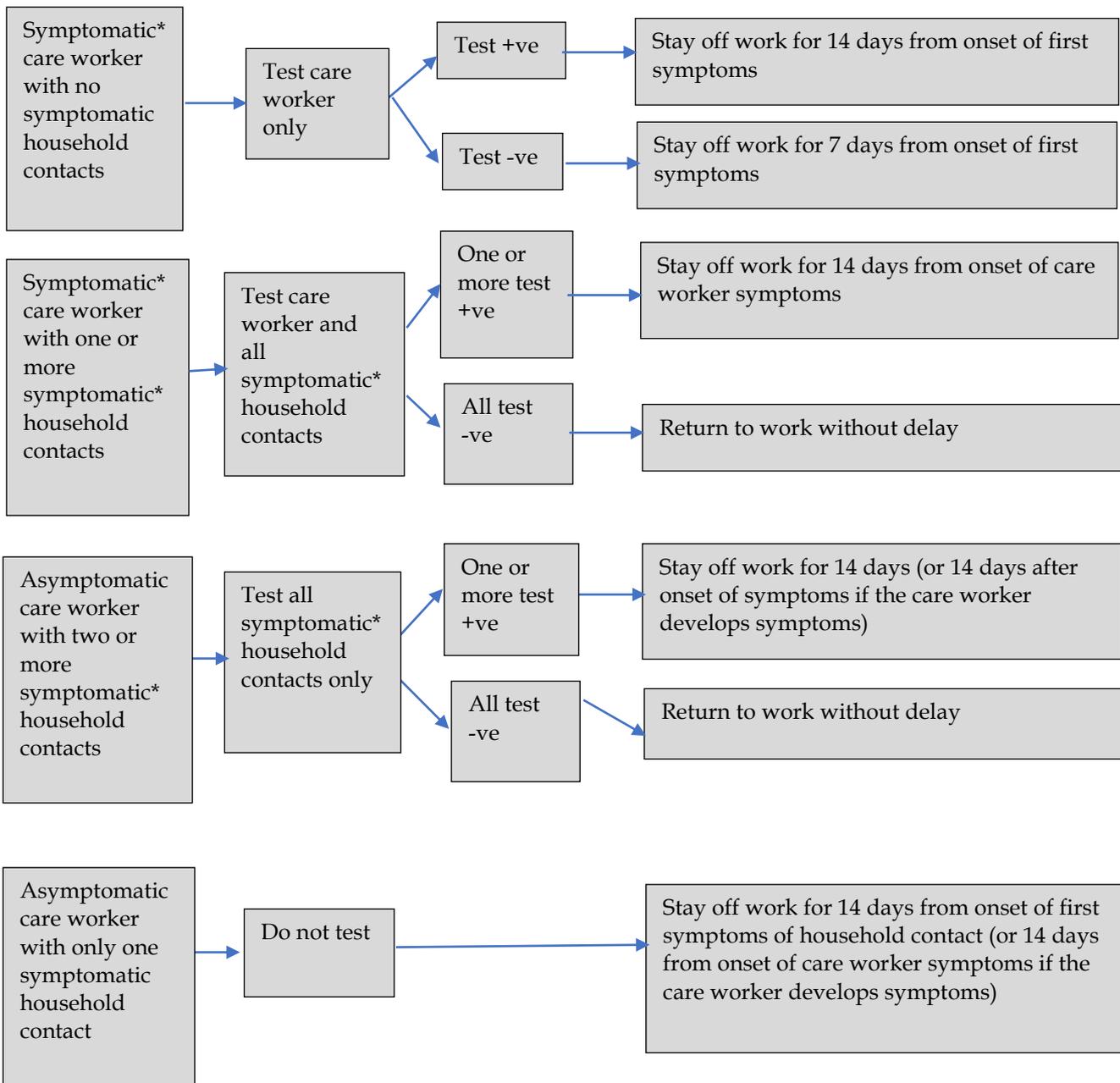
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Gogarty".

Dr Mike Gogarty
Director of Public Health
Essex County Council

Essex County Council
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Market Road, Chelmsford
CM1 1LX
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Testing – Return to Work Flowchart



*symptomatic means a high temperature or a new continuous cough