

## COVID-19 Pandemic: Changes to testing procedure Q&A

UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) has created this Q&A to clarify the changes that have been made to testing procedures in light of the government guidance on the COVID-19 pandemic, and the return of sport following the UK lockdown.

UKAD's Doping Control procedure (or Testing procedure) for tests conducted in the UK remains the same, and will continue to comply with the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) International Standard for Testing and Investigations (ISTI). However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, some adjustments will be applied to keep athletes and Doping Control Personnel (DCP) safe and support the countrywide effort to control the virus. These adjustments will be kept under continuous review and adapted as necessary to comply with evolving government guidance.

This information was updated on 08 April 2021.

### **NEW: I am aware that UKAD has been implementing a remote sample collection programme, how long will that be in place for?**

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UKAD has continuously changed its approach to testing where necessary as government guidance and restrictions have changed. In early 2021, UKAD introduced an alternative method of testing athletes at home in the UK, known as remote sample collection. This method of testing was a temporary measure put in place in response to the situation of the pandemic in the UK at that time to help towards minimising the spread of COVID-19.

As part of UKAD's ongoing review of its processes, **as of 12 April 2021, UKAD will not carry out further remote sample collection**, unless government guidance changes once again. From 12 April onwards, any testing at an athlete's home will take place indoors (in the athlete's home) as per the standard COVID-19 procedures (i.e. the DCP will enter the athlete's home).

Health and safety of the DCP, athletes and anyone involved in the Doping Control process remains the priority. DCP will continue to maintain social distance throughout the process, perform proper hand hygiene and will be wearing PPE (face masks, head visors and gloves) when testing athletes in their home.

Should the situation and restrictions change, UKAD may choose to re-implement remote sample collection and will continue to keep athletes updated as to any changes to the process.

The DCP will also continue to inform athletes of any changes to the process when notifying an athlete at a test.

### **UPDATED: How is UKAD going to protect athletes and DCP amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?**

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Maintaining the health and wellbeing of athletes and DCP amidst COVID-19 is UKAD's priority during the testing process. Therefore, the testing procedure has been amended to incorporate social distancing, PPE and other safety measures to protect everyone involved.

The following procedures will be implemented as standard:

- DCP will need to self-certify before departing for every test to confirm that they have no symptoms, have not been in contact with anyone waiting to be tested for COVID-19 or awaiting results, and that, in accordance with Government advice and/or Test and Trace, they are not required to be quarantining or self-isolating for any reason.
- DCP will not be permitted to use public transport to travel to or from tests, in order to minimise their risk of wider exposure.
- DCP will not be asked to carry out testing if they are currently working as a healthcare professional where they are directly working with COVID-19 positive patients.
- If any DCP has symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, they will be advised to self-isolate and adhere to the government's Test and Trace system.
- DCP will not be permitted to work if they are generally unwell, irrespective of whether it is COVID-19 related.
- UKAD has registered with the government's workplace Lateral Flow testing scheme to enable all DCP to be Lateral Flow tested where required (e.g. testing at athlete's homes, blood testing). Where sport or event specific requirements are in place (e.g. the need for PCR testing), UKAD is working with NGBs and/or Event Organisers to ensure DCP adhere to these.
- Those who have travelled overseas to a location that is not listed on the Government's exemption list within the last 10 days will not be asked to work.
- Athletes are required to adhere to government guidelines to protect themselves, teammates and support personnel, as well as DCP if testing is requested.

### **UPDATED: What changes has UKAD made to testing procedures following the COVID-19 outbreak?**

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A two-metre distance must be maintained **at all times** between the athlete, the DCP and any third parties. Where absolutely necessary, this may be temporarily relaxed to one metre (no less) but only for a short period of time (England & Northern Ireland only). This will be in effect throughout the entire testing process going forward. The

only exception to this, will be for the collection of blood samples where social distancing will be breached for as short as time as possible to enable the effective collection of blood samples. Doping Control facilities will need to accommodate social distancing requirements, including for urine sample provision.

Direct contact (excluding for the collection of blood samples) is not allowed between DCP, athletes and any third parties. When collecting blood samples, because social distancing will need to be breached, BCOs will be wearing additional PPE (head visors and aprons) as extra protection.

DCP will be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), which will involve them wearing face masks and gloves. Head visors and aprons will be worn by the BCO for blood testing. Head visors will also be worn by the DCP when testing at an athlete's home. Athletes, and anyone attending the test with the athlete, will be strongly encouraged to wear PPE (face masks and gloves only), which will be provided by the DCP. However, they can choose to wear their own face mask if preferred, but gloves will be issued by the DCP.

Pens are not to be shared during the process and athletes should use their own pens. If there isn't one available, the DCP will provide a new and unused pen.

DCP and athletes are encouraged to regularly to wash their hands for 40-60 seconds, as advised by the World Health Organisation (WHO), throughout the testing process. To ensure that the surrounding surfaces are clean, DCP will disinfect work surfaces and materials (e.g. tabletops) being used before and after the testing procedure. The full testing procedure document is available on the [COVID-19 page of the UKAD website](#).

#### **UPDATED: What samples will the DCP take from athletes?**

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Both urine and blood samples will be collected from an athlete during the doping control process. Due to the need to breach social distance to collect blood samples, BCOs will be required to wear additional PPE (head visors and aprons) for this part of the testing procedure.

#### **UPDATED: Will DCP visit athletes at home to carry out testing?**

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Yes. UKAD reserves the right to conduct testing at any time and any place and will do so in accordance with government guidance and the control measures set out in detail above.

On occasion, UKAD may put in place alternative remote testing facilities or methods, e.g. mobile sampling unit, if it deems this is the most suitable way to protect the health and safety and well-being of the athlete and the DCP. Any such remote testing facility

will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each test. Athletes will not be able to choose where Doping Control takes place; this is a decision to be determined solely by UKAD. Should DCP request to test an athlete within an alternative remote testing facility, the athlete **must** comply with this request, as a refusal or failure to comply with this request may amount to an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV), which could lead to a four-year ban from sport.

### **UPDATED: What if an athlete or the DCP starts to develop COVID-19 symptoms after testing?**

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Athletes should immediately inform UKAD via [athlete@ukad.org.uk](mailto:athlete@ukad.org.uk) or their NGB if they develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 up to 10 days after a test. This will enable UKAD to notify the relevant DCP. This does not replace the athlete's requirement to engage with the relevant government test and trace system, as set out below.

This process is in addition to any relevant government requirements of a test and trace system. Where an athlete has tested positive for COVID-19 or developed COVID-19 symptoms within 10 days of a doping control test, through their engagement with the test and trace system, the athlete should confirm that they have been tested by UKAD and that UKAD can be contacted for further details (if required).

Equally, we require DCP to notify UKAD if they develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive. In these circumstances, UKAD will inform the athlete and the NGB.

### **Are there differences in the Doping Control procedures in light of the different lockdown measures across each Home Nation?**

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The changes to the Doping Control procedure apply across all the Home Nations. However, the social distancing requirements will be adjusted so that they are in accordance with the current regulations within that home nation, for example, the relaxation to one metre social distancing is only permitted for tests in England and Northern Ireland.

### **How will UKAD manage testing in instances of regional lockdown and/or national lockdowns?**

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UKAD will review this on a case-by-case basis and will assess the restrictions in place to determine any potential impact on testing and the Doping Control procedures. At all times UKAD will prioritise the health and safety of all involved in the Doping control process when making decisions relating to local and/or national lockdowns. However, testing can and will continue to take place in areas with additional regional restrictions and/or during future national lockdowns.

### **Is there an alternative plan in place in case the government reimpose stricter lockdown measures?**

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UKAD is continually reviewing its processes and procedures to ensure that they are in line with evolving government guidance. In the event that the government reimposes stricter lockdown measures, UKAD will review and, where necessary, update its processes accordingly and advise athletes and NGBs on any changes.

### **What if the athlete is self-isolating when DCP arrive? What if the athlete is in a clinically extremely vulnerable group?**

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DCP will ask athletes a series of COVID-19-related safeguarding/assessment questions on arriving at a testing location. These questions will give athletes the opportunity to identify themselves or, if testing is taking place at home, anyone in their household who is self-isolating or quarantining for any reason, including those presenting symptoms or who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Additionally, when testing at an athlete's home, athletes will be asked to clarify if they or, anyone in their household, are shielding because they are considered as clinically extremely vulnerable or high-risk. Athletes should not refuse the test outright but should comply with the DCP and answer the questions to the best of their knowledge.

Once the questions have been answered and documented, UKAD may decide not to continue with testing. Where this decision is taken by UKAD, the athlete will not be considered to have refused the test and it will not be considered to be an ADRV. Athletes **must** answer the DCP's questions fully and truthfully. Providing information to DCP that is misleading or false may be considered to be an ADRV of Tampering, which can result in a ban from sport of up to four years.

### **What can an athlete do to help the testing process?**

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The process will take longer than usual due to additional control measures and to ensure the health and well-being of all involved. UKAD asks that athletes allow DCP to set the pace for the procedure, and that they follow the DCP's instructions i.e. be patient and do not rush, no matter how many times they may have been tested before.

Verbal communication throughout will be key due to social distancing e.g. DCP will need to guide the athlete through the process of splitting the sample from two metres away.

Athletes can help protect the DCP by:

- observing social distancing rules - keeping a two-metre distance (or where necessary, no less than one metre – England & Northern Ireland only) at all times and staying within sight

- performing proper hand hygiene practices - hand washing or hand sanitising (the DCP can provide guidance on the correct techniques if required)
- wearing PPE during the entire process (gloves must be provided by the DCP, personal face masks can be used)

### **What are the consequences for not complying with the amended testing procedure?**

A failure to comply with the amended testing procedure could result in an ADRV and a ban from sport of up to four years. Conduct which could result in the commission of an ADRV and a ban from sport includes, but is not limited to:

- providing false or misleading information to the DCP
- refusing to provide a sample on the basis that an athlete is not satisfied with the control measures UKAD has in place
- refusing to grant entry to the DCP to a location chosen for testing
- refusing to undertake testing within the remote testing facility that UKAD has determined as the Doping Control Station

### **What can an athlete do if they have any concerns over the testing process?**

If during the test the athlete has any concerns over the process, the athlete should tell the DCP. The DCP in attendance will then be able to contact UKAD directly to get further guidance.

The athlete should also record any concerns they have on the Doping Control Form (DCF) or feedback via the link listed on the form. They can contact UKAD directly via [athlete@ukad.org.uk](mailto:athlete@ukad.org.uk) or speak to their NGB.

The DCF is the official form used to record all UKAD tests. A copy of which is retained by the athlete.

### **What if a different agency to UKAD comes to test me?**

An athlete can be tested by their National Anti-Doping Organisation (NADO), such as UKAD for UK athletes. They can also be tested by the NADO of a country in which they are training or living.

In addition to this an athlete may be tested by the International Federation (IF) for their sport.

WADA has urged all Anti-Doping Organisations (ADOs) to follow the advice of governments and health authorities to ensure proper protection of athletes and Sample Collection Personnel (SCP). Athletes should comply with the SCP during testing, while adhering to the guidance in the country where the test is being completed. If an athlete has any questions about this, or has concerns about the

testing procedures, they should contact their NGB or IF, as well as UKAD. Refusing a test may result in a ban.

The changes to the testing procedure outlined by UKAD applies only to tests taking place in the UK by UKAD DCP.