

COVID-19 - rapid workplace testing for those without symptoms

This week the Government has launched a new scheme to support businesses open during lockdown to access workplace testing for any member of staff not showing symptoms.

The scheme is open to businesses with more than 50 employees where staff cannot work from home during lockdown and will help to stop the spread of coronavirus and ensure vital public and economic services can continue.

What to do next

If you employ more than 50 staff, please follow the steps below:

Step 1: Register for testing in your workplace via the [Government online portal](#) – it's quick and easy to do.

Step 2: Once you have registered, you will be invited to complete some online training to help you roll out the scheme in your workplace.

Step 3: When you've completed your training, you will be able to place an order for testing kits (lateral flow devices). These are free and will usually arrive within seven days.

Lateral flow testing is a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus. The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes. Taking a lateral flow test usually involves taking a sample from the back of the throat near the tonsils and from the nose, using a swab.

The swab is dipped into an extraction solution. This is then dripped on to the device's paper pad, producing the reaction that gives the result.

If a member of your staff gets a positive result, they must self-isolate immediately, preventing further transmission of the virus.

A negative result means that active coronavirus infection was not detected, at the time of the test. However, this does not guarantee that the person does not have coronavirus. You should continue to ensure employees follow coronavirus rules, including regular hand washing, social distancing and face coverings where required.

If you employ less than 50 staff, rapid community-based testing for those without symptoms is currently being planned by the County Council, working closely with district local authorities. Further information on how to access this facility will be published on the County Council's website in the next fortnight.

Why register for a workplace scheme?

COVID can cause very serious illness but around one in three people who have the virus have no symptoms. By offering this type of test at work, you will be able to quickly identify anyone who may be unknowingly passing the virus on to others, helping to safeguard your workforce, their families and loved ones, as well as your customers.

[More information](#) about the scheme is available on the Government's website.

In addition, the following 'working safely' guidance provides further information on keeping your workplace COVID-safe.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

We are at a crucial stage of the pandemic and must continue to do all we can to work together to reduce further spread of the virus. Testing plays a critical part in this process and is just one of the many tools available to help us prevent further transmission. We urge you to take up this workplace offer to keep your employees and local community safe.

Thank you.