

Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Update on school and community testing programmes

Tuesday 19 January 2021

Community Lateral Flow Testing Programme

What are lateral flow tests?

- Lateral flow tests (LFTs) are conducted in the same way as a PCR test using a long 'cotton bud' to swab the tonsils and then to swab in the nostril(s)
- The test takes 20 to 30 minutes to produce a test result
- The test detects the viral load of COVID-19 present in the sample
- If the viral load is high enough, a positive result is obtained



Lateral flow tests provide a quick result that indicates whether or not someone without symptoms (asymptomatic) is carrying COVID-19 at an infectious level that could be transmitted to others without knowing it.



Identifying these asymptomatic cases and ensuring they isolate is a useful tool to break transmission chains and control the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

Public Health Aims and Objectives



Aim

- To actively identify asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 and to reduce transmission in the event of an outbreak

Where will testing be targeted?

- Initial focus will be critical and key workers and anyone who is required to leave home for work or a crucial activity or for the management of local Covid-19 outbreaks.
- The Military have worked hard with Public Health and council colleagues to identify the target population groups by job sector and work to model and finalise this list is ongoing.

Schools Testing Programme



To safeguard the health of the teaching workforce and keep as many staff and pupils in school and college as possible, the government has introduced a testing programme for schools using rapid-result coronavirus tests.

The schools programme comprises two elements:



the school and college workforce to conduct weekly testing of staff



for students and pupils as well as the workforce to conduct daily testing for those identified as close contacts of workforce colleagues, students or pupils that have tested positive

For every group, testing is voluntary, but those who are eligible for tests are strongly encouraged to participate to reduce the risk of transmission within schools and colleges.

Schools Testing Programme



- As part of our ongoing response to COVID-19 the East Berkshire Health Protection Board provides oversight of the delivery of our Outbreak Control Plan. At last week's East Berkshire Health Protection Board.
- At last week's Health Protection Board meeting, the Board discussed the schools testing programme.
- In light of case numbers locally and the new variant of COVID-19, which is prevalent across Berkshire, the Board recommended that proceed only with weekly testing of staff for the purpose of case finding.
- We have advised our schools and colleges not to proceed with the second element of the programme; daily testing of those who have had contact with positive cases.
- Instead, all close contacts of positive cases should continue to be instructed to self-isolate for 10 full days after contact with a positive case.
- This decision will be kept under review by the East Berkshire Health Protection Board.