

Dorset Community Rapid Testing Service

Testing to protect, testing to find

Public Health Dorset, on behalf of BCP and Dorset councils, is setting up a Dorset Community Rapid Testing Service.

We are offering weekly asymptomatic testing to employees of businesses, charities and voluntary organisations (employing less than 250 people) and the self-employed across Dorset who **cannot work from home due to the nature of their role**. One in three people who have Covid-19 show no symptoms and can therefore spread it without knowing. Testing will be for a period of six weeks.

To qualify for testing your business/organisation **must** either provide an essential service or support the vulnerable. Examples include:

Protecting the vulnerable: working with vulnerable people, housing support, mortuary or funeral staff, essential trades people e.g. plumbing, transport providers for vulnerable groups, sheltered housing

Essential services: small businesses/service industry e.g. food production, retail, delivery drivers, pre-school staff, community volunteer groups, trades e.g. engineering, energy

Access to this service is for people who **don't** already have access to asymptomatic testing. If you already have access to asymptomatic testing e.g. through an NHS or care home employer, you are not able to access the community service.

If your organisation/ business would to have access to the rapid testing service you must register its interest, from **Monday 1 February**, by completing a simple registration form at <https://dorset-self.achieveservice.com/service/Community-Rapid-Testing>

Further information about asymptomatic testing can be found at <https://www.publichealthdorset.org.uk/your-health/protecting-your-health/dorset-rapid-community-testing.aspx>

FAQs

Q. What is the purpose of rolling out Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing for asymptomatic keyworkers?

LFD testing is used to pick up some of those with asymptomatic infection so that individuals and their contacts can isolate as soon as possible and reduce the spread of the infection. Experience to date in other settings suggests that in some instances the test will also identify people at an early stage of infection before they become symptomatic. It **does not** enable us to go back to a normal way of life or to change how we are currently working. We must all continue to follow infection prevention and national guidance both in and outside of the workplace and should not change our behaviour following a negative test.

Q. What is an LFD test? How does this differ to a PCR test?

A Lateral Flow Device is technology similar to a pregnancy kit. Like PCR testing, a swab is taken from the nose and throat. With LFD testing, the sample swab is added to a fluid in the test kit which releases particles of the virus where these are present. While PCR swabs need to be

processed in a laboratory which takes longer, swabs processed using the LFDs receive results in 30 minutes.

Q. Who can access community lateral flow testing?

In Dorset we are testing to protect both those who are vulnerable and essential services. We are therefore offering testing to businesses, charities and voluntary organisations (employing less than 250 people) and the self-employed who work with vulnerable people, are vulnerable themselves or provide an essential services. Testing is for employees who **cannot work from home due to the nature of their role.**

Q. Will regular LFD testing allow me to go back to a more normal way of life?

No. LFD testing will identify about 50% of those with asymptomatic infection so that they can isolate as soon as possible to stop the spread of Covid. If you receive a negative LFD test this does not guarantee that you do not have Covid-19. Those with low levels of virus are more likely to test negative. You must continue to follow all workplace and national guidelines e.g. wearing PPE and social distancing

Q. What are the benefits of regular testing?

- Rapid testing, using a lateral flow device, identifies cases of Covid-19 when a person is more likely to be most infectious.
- Testing identifies infection allowing individuals, and their household, to isolate immediately which stops the further spread of Covid-19.
- Regular testing will make it safer for you to continue to work and support your local community and the pandemic effort. It will also help protect those vulnerable people who you may come in to contact with through your job e.g. those who may be shielding.

Q. What do I do now?

Businesses, organisations and those self-employed who want to sign up to a weekly Covid test for six weeks should first register their interest at <https://dorset-self.achieveservice.com/service/Community-Rapid-Testing> from Monday 1 February. If you meet the priority criteria, the Dorset Testing Service will contact you to let you know when and how you can access testing. Sites are being set up across the BCP and Dorset council areas.

Q. What if I employ over 250 people?

NHS Test and Trace is working with government departments, institutions and employers across both public and private sectors to support delivery of asymptomatic testing to large organisations, including those providing critical services. Delivery will be through on-site testing in the workplace.

Large companies can register their interest for asymptomatic testing by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>

For more information, please contact P-and-PSector@dhsc.gov.uk

Anyone **with Covid-19 symptoms** must isolate, with their household members, and book a Covid test as soon as possible at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>