Rapid Testing factsheet and FAQs

Buckinghamshire Council are working closely with the NHS to drive down COVID-19 infection rates in the county. The introduction of Lateral Flow Testing (LFT), or 'rapid testing', focuses on identifying those who have COVID-19 without symptoms (asymptomatic) in order for them, and their close contacts, to self-isolate to prevent further spread. In the first instance, this service will be introduced to frontline staff and volunteers who work in public-facing roles.

Rapid Testing in Buckinghamshire

What?

We are introducing rapid testing centres across the county to support our public-facing workers and volunteers, offering a regular opportunity to receive a lateral flow test (LFT) and identify any asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread in the county. LFTs are already widely used in NHS settings, care homes and schools, and this programme will increase its reach to more of our essential frontline services.

To really make a difference, we need people to be tested every three days. This is because the nature of their roles puts them more at risk of coming into contact with COVID-19. Testing every three days gives us the best chance to identify asymptomatic people who are infected before they spread the virus to others.

Where and When?

The rapid testing sites will be opened in a phased approach, current plans include sites in:

Location	Address	Opening date	Opening times (wk 1)
Aylesbury	Unit 3, Vale Retail Park, 658 Vale Park Drive, Aylesbury. HP20 1DH	w/c 1 February	9am - 5pm
High Wycombe	Buckinghamshire Council Offices, 15 Queen Victoria Street, High Wycombe, HP11 1BB	w/c 1 February	9am - 5pm
Amersham	Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham. HP6 6AJ	w/c 8 February	9am - 5pm
Buckingham	Swan Pool and Leisure Centre, London Road, Buckingham. MK18 1AE	w/c 8 February	9am - 5pm

Who?

During the lockdown period, rapid testing centres will focus on testing people who are critical to supporting communities, responding to the pandemic and/or at higher risk of infection and transmission. This includes people who;

- Are permitted to leave home to go to work, or

- volunteer in the community, and
- work in a public facing role

If you can exclusively work from home, you should follow the government guidelines and continue to do so, you do not need to leave home to visit a rapid test centre.

How?

15-minute test appointments should be booked in advance online at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/bookarapidtest unless a specific approach to engage with staff for maximum uptake has been agreed with the Test Centre Manager. The test registration and results process are delivered digitally using the test participant's smartphone or tablet.

Before arrival: Participants can create accounts before they come to the test centre to save time and so that they do not need to enter their details every time they get tested.
We recommend that participant create and NHS login before coming to the test site by registering at: https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/register-kit/login-choice and select 'register using NHS login'.

On the day: Participant will be greeted by an assistant and handed a registration card and test kit. Participants are required to access the dedicated URL and enter their personal details and test kit barcode each time they are tested. This is accessed either by scanning the QR code at the test site or visiting: https://gov.uk/enter-lateral-flow-test

Participant registration may take between 5-15 mins per participant depending on the questions that they have to answer for their circumstance, their digital literacy, and whether they have a "NHS Login" account or not. If participants do not have a smart phone, staff will be available to register the participant details and test kit barcode for them. Results will be emailed or sent via SMS.

What happens next?
It takes approximately 30 minutes to process the test result. Test participants should not wait at the test site to receive their results. They should leave as soon as the test is completed. The results will be sent directly to the participant via email or text message around 30 minutes after the test was completed. No record of the result is maintained at the test centre.

FAQs

Who should get tested at these sites?

To start with our rapid testing centres will focus on public-facing staff and volunteers. This means people who are leaving home to go to work out in the community. If you work from home, you do not need to get tested.

Why should I get tested if I have no symptoms?

Around 1 in 3 people who have COVID-19 have no symptoms (asymptomatic). This means they can infect people without knowing. To break the chain of infection we need to identify asymptomatic people at risk of infecting the public people as soon as possible – and isolate from the public to help prevent infection rates increasing.

What is the difference between Polymerase Chain Reaction and Lateral Flow Tests?

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests are designed for people who are displaying symptoms of the virus and is designed to detect the virus in someone who is already infected, they provide a good indication of the number cases, but are time intensive. For those displaying no symptoms (asymptomatic), Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) are the best option to catch possible COVID-19 cases – due to their speed they can be repeated frequently and at high volume with minimal impact to the individual with no need to self-isolate while awaiting a result.

Why do I have to have the test so regularly?

Regular testing is the key to breaking the chain of transmission. A negative COVID-19 test tells you that at the time you took the test you did not have COVID-19. However, it is possible that not enough of the virus was present to show on the test or you may catch the virus after leaving the test centre. To really make a difference we need you to continue to be tested every three days. This is because you could have come in to contact with the virus after leaving the testing centre.

Should I still get tested if I have had COVID-19?

You should not get tested for 90 days after having COVID-19.

Should I still get tested if I have had the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. No vaccination is 100% effective, and we don't yet know if the vaccines will stop the infection of others or how long the protection will last. So, people should continue to be routinely tested and must follow the Covid-19 safer ways of living and working guidelines.

What should I do if I have a positive result on my Lateral Flow Test?

If you test positive you will need to self-isolate for 10 days, as will any close contacts including other people in your house or support bubble.

Is testing mandatory?

Rapid testing for COVID-19 is voluntary. However, to help break the chain of transmission, we strongly recommend essential workers are tested regularly.

Should I go for a Lateral Flow Test if I have symptoms?

No, these tests are for people who are asymptomatic (do not have any COVID-19 symptoms). They are designed to check that essential workers and volunteers do not unknowingly pass the virus on to others. If you have any COVID-19 symptoms you should self-isolate and arrange to get a free NHS test to check if you have coronavirus - https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Can I bring my family along for a test as well?

These tests are designed for those who need to go out to work in public-facing roles, so the centres will not test under 16's - there are other arrangements in schools and for young people who have symptoms.

Please visit our website for more information:
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/bookarapidtest