

Testing for people without symptoms

(Asymptomatic Rapid Antigen Testing)

Frequently Asked Questions – Managers

A link to these FAQs can be found online at www.bolton.gov.uk/testingmanagers

Why are we offering this testing programme?

Around one in three people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and will be spreading it without realising it.

Broadening testing to identify those showing no symptoms will mean finding positive cases more quickly, and break chains of transmission.

Which workers are being tested and how have they been prioritised?

The asymptomatic (symptom-free) targeted testing is being offered to 'critical workers', across the borough, who cannot work from home.

The tests are being targeted at people in essential roles who are providing critical services needed to keep the borough running.

The list of critical workers can be found here: [Click Here](#) ▶

Tests are available to people who live or work in the Bolton borough, regardless of their age. Children under 18 will need parental consent.

Why is asymptomatic testing not available to everyone?

We have to prioritise targeting resources at critical workers who cannot work from home, to ensure business continuity for the vital services we all depend on.

Is the programme compulsory – why should we take part?

Tests are voluntary but taking part will help protect your staff, members of the public and help us bring the virus under control faster.

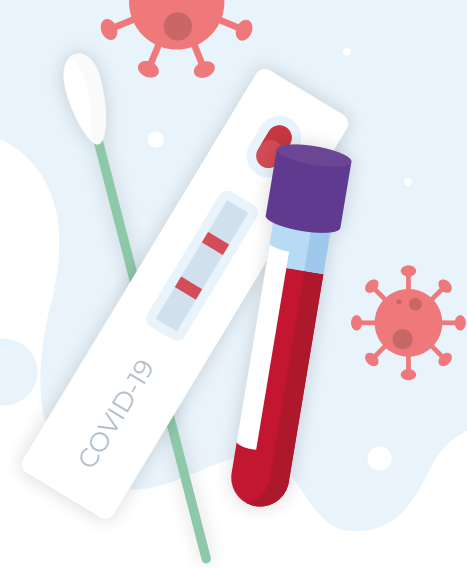
We aim to identify people who do not have COVID symptoms but who are infectious and could spread the infection to others unknowingly. Identifying and supporting infectious people to isolate before they develop symptoms will help reduce spread.

Employers will benefit by identifying any asymptomatic (symptom-free) staff early before the virus can spread across the workforce ensuring business continuity for your organisation.

Is the test mandatory or voluntary for staff?

Tests are voluntary, but your organisation is strongly encouraged to take part to help keep your workplace safe for patients, customers, visitors, your workforce and their families.

We are hoping that you will recognise the benefits of getting involved in local testing efforts to reduce the spread of the virus in your community.



How long is the programme and what commitment do we need to make?

We anticipate the programme will last at least 6 weeks and advise that staff are tested twice weekly, but as a minimum once a week. There is no expectation to make a long-term commitment as the programme is voluntary.

What are the asymptomatic tests?

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests are rapid turnaround tests that are processed on site without any need for sending samples to a laboratory. The staff at the test sites have received special training to carry out the processing. Results are ready very quickly – normally within 30 minutes.

Further information on how the lateral flow test works can be found on the link below.

[Click Here](#) 

How accurate is the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test?

Extensive clinical evaluation shows lateral flow tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community, including for people who are asymptomatic (symptom-free). The LFD tests are particularly good at picking up people who are highly infectious. No test is 100% accurate and as with all tests there is the potential to have a false positive or a false negative result. How to manage results is explained further down in this document.

Are LFD tests less accurate than Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests?

LFD and PCR tests have different characteristics and different uses. PCR tests have higher specificity and sensitivity but require a laboratory to process results and are therefore slower and more expensive. They are therefore well suited to specific use cases, such as those with COVID symptoms.

LFD tests have lower sensitivity than PCR tests but they deliver results faster and do not require a lab, making them more scalable. As such, they allow us to test for larger numbers of asymptomatic people and get them their test result faster than with PCR technology. This will enable us to capture a large percentage of people who are infected and infectious, but asymptomatic and unaware of the fact they are possibly spreading COVID.

Where and how can staff get tested?

Community testing will take place at three designated sites across the borough. Once you have registered an interest we will update on the sites available for your workforce.

Please get in touch to express an interest in the asymptomatic testing programme by emailing boltontesting@bolton.gov.uk

Bookings will be through an online portal. This will be made available to you.

What happens if staff cannot get to the test site will home testing kits be made available?

It is not possible to offer home testing kits for the LFD testing at this time, as the product is not licenced for this. Please email boltontesting@bolton.gov.uk to see if an alternative testing site or another day/time can be arranged.

Please also ensure that staff are aware of the safer travel guidance during a coronavirus outbreak and it is followed, ensuring staff are supported to travel as safely as possible to and from the testing centre.

[Click Here](#) 

What times are the test sites open and when does testing start?

These may vary day to day, due to demand, and the most up to date information will be uploaded onto the booking portal. This will be supplied once you register your interest.

Do the employees have to wait for the result before coming into work?

This is not a requirement of the programme and testing arrangements can be discussed when you register your interest to take part in the programme.

How will the results be communicated?

The results will be sent via text message and/or an email using the contact details recorded by the staff member at the registration/check-in process. The results will be communicated within approximately 30 minutes of taking a test with appropriate guidance to follow depending on the result.

What happens if the test is negative?

They can travel on to work, but it is important that you reiterate that they must continue to follow the preventative measures currently recommended for stopping the spread of the virus. Bolton is currently under a national lockdown.

To protect yourself and others, you must remember:

- **Hands** wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water often, and as soon as you get home - use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- **Face** wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- **Space** stay at least 2 metres away from anyone you do not live with, or who is not in your support bubble.
- **Limit your contacts** you must not mix with other households indoors or outdoors unless they are in your support or childcare bubble.

If they develop symptoms during the day, they should go home straight away and book a PCR test via the national portal at [www.gov.uk.get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

What happens if the test is positive?

If the LFD test comes back positive the staff member must not come into work but must return home and self-isolate along with their household for 10 days. A positive LFD test should currently be followed up by taking a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result. A PCR test for those with a positive LFD result can be booked via the national portal at [www.gov.uk.get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or call 119.

If the confirmatory PCR test result is negative, then you will no longer be required to self-isolate, and your contacts will no longer need to quarantine. You will still need to adhere to the national restrictions in place at the time.

If the confirmatory PCR test comes back positive, then you must continue to isolate for 10 days from your initial symptom-free test. Everyone in your household will be a 'close contact' and must also self-isolate for 10 days. Contact tracing will be initiated through the NHS or local contact tracing team and other close contacts will be advised to quarantine for 10 days.

Please check the most to date guidance below.

[Click Here](#) 

Further advice on self-isolating, and the support available, can be found on the [Bolton Council website](#).

What happens if the result is invalid?

The staff member should be retested at the most convenient time. They can book another test via the booking portal supplied.

What happens if staff are on annual leave on the days allocated, do they still need to take the test? No. The process is designed to support staff to remain safely in work and prevent the spread in the work setting.

How frequently will staff need to get tested?

Critical workers, who cannot work from home, should aim to be tested twice weekly, every three to four days (or as a minimum once a week). Hourly slots will be released on a dedicated booking system and it will be for staff to select the most suitable slot for them.

Should staff get an LFT test if they already have coronavirus symptoms?

These tests are for symptom-free people only.

Please remind staff not to attend if they develop any coronavirus symptoms, and instead **book a PCR test** online or by phone on 119.

Anyone who has previously received a positive test result for COVID-19 should only be retested within a 90-day period if they develop any new symptoms of COVID-19. Please check the latest guidance.

[Click Here](#) ▶

Will this testing programme remove the need for workers who have been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case to self-isolate?

Government self-isolation advice should be followed at all times. This test does not remove the need to self-isolate should you need to. Please see the guidance below.

[Click Here](#) ▶

What should staff do if they develop symptoms in between allocated testing days?

Them and their household should isolate immediately and book a test through the national portal www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Further questions?

Please get in touch by emailing boltontesting@bolton.gov.uk