

Asymptomatic testing sites available for key workers

We are currently working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to agree the best approach to providing Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing across HMCTS.

The Government announced that keyworkers who need to attend their place of work for essential business are entitled to access COVID asymptomatic testing – this includes legal professionals who need to attend court for hearings. This testing will allow those individuals to continue working safely and reduce the risk of infection in our communities.

While we are continuing to work with DHSC to explore regular nation-wide testing, legal professionals can find details of local authority testing sites available to key workers on their websites. These will contain details of location and how you can book a test.

The initiative forms part of the Government's commitment to roll out voluntary asymptomatic testing for critical workers during the lockdown. Tests are self-administered and will provide results in around 30 minutes. These tests are designed to identify those who may be carrying the virus, but not showing symptoms (asymptomatic). These tests are not for those who are displaying symptoms or who have been asked to isolate themselves. In those cases, people must book their tests via the normal NHS routes.

Whilst this is a voluntary initiative, we encourage anyone attending court in person to participate if your local authority is offering the test.

You can view the attached list of local authority sites for more detail on what is available in your local area.

COVID variant testing advice for key workers residing in certain areas

On Monday 1st February, the government announced a plan to test all individuals within postcodes where community transmission of a variant of Covid has been detected.

The link to the announcement is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surge-testing-to-be-deployed-to-monitor-and-suppress-spread-of-covid-19-variant>

The government is advising the following:

“Every person over 16 living in these locations is strongly encouraged to take a COVID test this week, whether they are showing symptoms or not. Mobile testing units (MTUs) will be deployed offering PCR testing to people without symptoms who have to leave their home for work or essential reasons, with local authorities encouraging people to get tested in the area by providing additional home test kits.”

The advice has been given to those key workers residing in the following postcodes:

- East of England (EN10) in HMCTS SE Region
- London (W7, N17, CR4)
- North West (PR9)
- South East (ME15, GU21)
- West Midlands (WS2)