

Government Covid 19 rapid testing offer for workers unable to work from home - food sector

Introduction

Following the recent government announcements about rapid testing, Defra would like to invite businesses in the food sector with more than 50 employees to register for the provision of government-funded lateral flow technology (LFT/LFD) to test asymptomatic workers. These free test kits will be available until 31 March 2021.

Further details are provided below including contact details if you would like to find out more or your company would like to take up the offer:

What we can offer

The food sector is a critical industry that we have to keep running and where workers cannot work from home. Therefore, we are inviting employers to establish Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATSs) in workplaces, which will enable employees and contractors to access LFDs and receive rapid point of care Covid 19 results. The government will provide support to do this, including:

- a limited period of free LFDs shipped to one location;
- a clinically approved protocol (Standard Operating Procedures);
- a Guidebook to describe how to set up and run a safe and effective testing site;
- on-demand training for the operatives that will process tests & run the site; and
- a GDPR-compliant digital solution to report results to Public Health England.

Please refer to the **Introduction to LFD Testing in Workplaces** PowerPoint on the Huddle which fully describes the offer and requirements.

We recognise that establishing an ATS site may not be feasible or viable for smaller businesses or premises, and that this model is less suitable for mobile employees working in the field away from a fixed location. Government is developing options in this space, but in the meantime, we encourage businesses with fewer than 50 employees to contact their local authority in the first instance to explore the possibility of using the growing number community testing facilities.

The current offer does not yet include LFD tests that employees take at home without assistance/supervision, nor the daily testing of contacts of those who have tested positive at an ATS (as a means of avoiding self-isolation). MHRA approval is on-going for these approaches, and communications will be issued if/when either situation changes, but we do not want the absence of this approval to stop businesses registering for weekly testing.

Next steps

Those that want to further engage, please register your interest with P&P Sector Testing Queries P-and-PSector@dhsc.gov.uk including “Register interest for National Worker Programme” in the subject line and including the following information in the email body:

| | |
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| Institution name | |
| Email for main point of contact | |
| Industry sector | e.g. Food manufacturing |
| Company registration number | |
| Size of company (# employees) | e.g. 50-250, >250 |

This offer currently covers locations in England only, since conversations in the Devolved Administrations are ongoing. Please flag if your business includes locations in Wales, Scotland, or Northern Ireland.

Please feel free to pass on to any colleagues who you feel this would be of benefit to.