



***Date: 17/12/2020***

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## **Community Testing**

A major programme of COVID-19 community testing will begin tomorrow in Kirklees.

From Friday (18 December), rapid tests for the virus will be available for anyone who doesn't have coronavirus symptoms. The programme will give everyone, aged 11 and over, who lives or works in Kirklees the chance to play their part in keeping their community safe.

Four walk-in testing centres will open as part of the council's latest bid to reduce rates of infection.

Using Lateral Flow Testing technology, the rapid tests are easy to administer and results come back within thirty minutes. The council hopes that community testing will identify more cases and stop the spread of the virus.

Until now, testing has only been available to people who have symptoms or if they work in certain jobs. Community testing means anyone can get a free test and play their part in keeping others safe.

Last week, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, announced that Kirklees had been successful in its bid to be amongst the first tier 3 local authorities to build community testing capacity. With help from the military, the council has built four new testing sites and will have support from the RAF to start testing from Friday.

The sites will open on Friday at Batley Library, The Walsh Building in Dewsbury, The Hudawi Centre in Huddersfield and the Greenwood Centre in Ravensthorpe.

Testing will be available at all the sites from 12noon on Friday morning and will operate from 8am to 8pm every day for the next few weeks. Opening times will be reduced during the festive period between 24-27 December – details will be shared on Kirklees Council's website at [www.kirklees.gov.uk/covid19communitytesting](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/covid19communitytesting)

Anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus: a new, continuous dry cough, high temperature or loss of taste and smell, must book a test through NHS Test & Trace by calling 119 or visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

## **Kirklees Director of Public Health, Rachel Spencer-Henshall, said:**

“One of the things that makes this virus so difficult to control is that it can be passed on by people who don’t have any symptoms. Community testing is a breakthrough because it will help us identify more cases that we wouldn’t otherwise be able to find.

“By getting one of these tests, you can reduce the risk of passing on the virus unwittingly to family and friends.

“Anyone who has a positive result will be given advice about how they can access support as they isolate.

“We want as many local people as possible to come forward for community testing. Everyone has a part to play in protecting your family and community by having a test. It’s free, quick and will help us stop the spread.”

## **More information**

More information on community testing will be available on the council’s website at: [www.kirklees.gov.uk/covid19communitytesting](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/covid19communitytesting)