

9 November 2020

Dear colleague

ASYMPTOMATIC NHS STAFF TESTING

Following further scientific validation of the lateral flow testing modality, and confirmation over the weekend from Test and Trace that they can now supply the NHS with sufficient test kits, we are pleased to confirm that asymptomatic testing will be made available to all patient-facing NHS staff. We want to express our thanks to the 34 trusts who will deploy this technology this week, benefiting over 250,000 staff, and we will work with you to ensure that full roll out is in place from next week.

This builds on the extensive asymptomatic staff testing already occurring in parts of the country with outbreaks – over 70,000 NHS staff have been tested asymptotically in those areas in recent days.

With appropriate training staff will be able to test themselves at home twice a week with results available before coming into work. While lateral flow devices have a lower specificity and sensitivity than rt qPCR tests, testing twice weekly helps mitigate the sensitivity considerations, and to mitigate the lower specificity, all positive results will be retested via PCR. This will start from next week.

In addition, as previously notified, NHS trusts should continue to use their own PCR laboratory capacity for appropriate staff testing, and increasing amounts of LAMP saliva testing will be made available to hospitals by Test and Trace in November and December.

The Innova lateral flow device (currently already in use in Liverpool and selected for wider roll-out) comes in boxes of 25; these boxes contain 25 cartridges, swabs etc and two bottles of buffer. To support the introduction of lateral flow testing, standard operating procedure, training materials, including a training video for trainers, a video for NHS staff, and an instruction leaflet will all be made available shortly.

An NHS England & NHS Improvement colleague will contact you with delivery details and further logistical information in the coming days.

Many thanks for putting this in place as soon as possible to support colleagues and patients across your organisation.

Yours sincerely,



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