

48,000 businesses already registered to offer workplace testing

- Regular, rapid testing will be a crucial tool to prevent outbreaks in the workplace as we cautiously ease restrictions, keeping employees safe and businesses open
- A major expansion of the free programme now means all businesses can access workplace testing, and are encouraged to register their interest by 31 March

Over 48,000 businesses have [registered their interest in the government's free workplace testing programme](#), using rapid lateral flow tests that can give a result in 30 minutes.

Over 9,000 businesses have already completed the sign-up process, and all other businesses are encouraged to register by 31 March to help keep their employees safe, prevent outbreaks and suppress the spread of the virus. Businesses are encouraged to register before 31 March, even if they're not yet open or are not able to start using the tests straight away.

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms, which means they could be spreading the virus in workplaces without knowing. Rapid testing for people without symptoms detects cases quickly, meaning positive cases can isolate immediately, breaking chains of transmission.

Testing will form a crucial part of everyday life as parts of society reopen. Regular testing could be the difference between a workplace being able to stay open and operational, or needing to close due to a COVID-19 outbreak.

New analysis by NHS Test and Trace shows [lateral flow \(LFD\) tests to have a specificity of at least 99.9%](#). This means that for every 1,000 lateral flow tests carried out, there is less than one false positive result.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

We have built a huge asymptomatic testing system from scratch, which is an essential part of our plan to reopen cautiously.

Rapid testing has been rolled out at a vast scale across a range of sectors, and it is fantastic that now over 48,000 businesses have signed up to offer rapid testing to employees. This is a huge step forward in getting businesses back on their feet and helping to keep people safe.

With around 1 in 3 people with the virus not having symptoms, regular testing is essential to bearing down on the virus and identify new variants of concern as we work towards restoring normal life. I strongly encourage all businesses to register their interest before the 31 March deadline.

Businesses have until 31 March to register for the government's workplace testing scheme, which will remain free until the end of June. Businesses of any size, including those with fewer than 50 employees, can sign up to offer workplace testing. Those who need to leave home for work can also access regular testing through community testing, which is now offered by all local authorities in England.

Regular, rapid testing is already in place for millions of people across the NHS, care homes and schools. The government has also confirmed twice-weekly testing using LFDs for free to all adults in households with nursery, primary, secondary school and college-aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles.

This is in addition to the 2 tests for all secondary and college students and staff per week. Staff at private, voluntary and independent nurseries also have access to rapid testing through their workplace.

Case studies

Phillips 66 Humber Refinery

Phillips 66 Humber Refinery produces up to 14 million litres, with around 20% of all UK petroleum products coming from the Humber Refinery. They are testing over 1,000 staff a week and have almost completed 10,000 tests in total.

Darren Cunningham, Lead Executive UK and General Manager at Humber Refinery, said:

When offered the opportunity to take part in lateral flow testing, we jumped at the opportunity. Why wouldn't we? It is another layer of protection to keep our staff, their families and our communities safer. The operation to set up large-scale testing for 1,000 staff weekly – and it did pose some challenges – we are now running smoothly, and happily sharing what we did to help other key industries set up their own LFT facility.

Siemens Mobility

Siemens Mobility has been a leader in transport solutions for more than 160 years and now employs 36,800 people worldwide, with 4,500 of those in the UK. The organisation's core areas are rolling stock, rail automation and electrification, turnkey systems and intelligent traffic systems. In total, Siemens Mobility operates from around 70 UK locations.

William Wilson, CEO of Siemens Mobility Limited, said:

Our people have played vital roles throughout the pandemic maintaining critical national infrastructure and helping essential

services to operate safely and efficiently. As we move towards the relaxation of lockdown rules, introducing regular COVID-19 testing, with almost instant results, plays a vital role in helping to track and contain virus spread, as well as provide our employees with peace of mind.

Unipart Group

Unipart Group is a leading UK manufacturer, full-service logistics provider and consultant headquartered in Oxford. Unipart operates across a range of market sectors, including automotive, healthcare and the NHS, manufacturing, mobile telecoms, rail, retail and technology. Around 130 workers are tested every week – 90% of the workforce working from this site.

Debs Astles, Unipart Group HR Director – Corporate Responsibility and Policy, said:

Encouraging our people to get regular tests is an important part of our COVID-safe commitment across our sites, and helps us support our colleagues' safety and wellbeing. This ensures we can continue to provide essential services to customers across key sectors such as healthcare and the NHS, automotive, essential retail and the construction industry.

Birchall Foodservice

Birchall Foodservice is an independent, family-owned business with depots in Burnley, Durham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent. The company employs 150 people. Birchall Foodservice delivers a 'one-stop shop' range of foods, drinks, non-foods and equipment to caterers working in the care, education and hospitality sectors.

Louise Birchall, sales director at Birchall Foodservice, said:

The introduction of rapid testing allows us to quickly identify asymptomatic cases of coronavirus within the business. By isolating these cases, we can stop any potential spread of COVID-19 and help protect our employees, their families and our customers. We are encouraging all local businesses, no matter the size, to introduce frequent, rapid testing amongst their workforce.

The Glasdon Group

The Glasdon Group is a design and manufacture company specialising in litter and recycling bins, road safety products, a diverse range of building systems, shelters, seating products, water safety products and snow-clearing equipment. The company employs over 250 employees and is based in Blackpool, Lancashire. They have been carrying out testing via their local authority,

Blackpool Council, since December 2020, and they now have 5 testing stations where they can process up to 60 tests per hour. The company carries out approximately 400 tests per week.

Gary Butler, Health and Safety Manager at the Glasdon Group, said:

Testing all of our staff and any visiting contractors twice per week is providing us with the confidence that our own control measures are having the desired result of protecting our employees during the pandemic. The rapid test results enable us to isolate any affected staff as quickly as possible, thus reducing the chance of an outbreak on the premises.

The response of the Glasdon employees to the testing programme has been positive and is going a long way to making them feel safe in their place of work during these difficult times. Testing twice per week is also providing a level of assurance to the employees' families that they are not putting their own households at extra risk by coming to work.

Background information

Businesses have until 31 March to [register for the government's workplace testing scheme](#), which will remain free until the end of June.