

# Government to deploy first British-manufactured rapid lateral flow antigen tests for COVID-19

The Government has ordered two million of the first British-manufactured rapid lateral flow antigen tests for COVID-19 to be validated by Public Health England, for use in asymptomatic testing, Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock has announced.

Derby-based company SureScreen Diagnostics is to provide two million of the lateral flow tests, which provide results in under 30 minutes, by next Friday (15 January), with the potential to provide millions more in the coming months.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

It is excellent to be working with a UK firm to deliver millions of these rapid tests, which are being deployed across the country to help protect our communities and most vital public services.

Roughly one in three people with Covid-19 don't display symptoms, meaning you can infect others unknowingly. This is why asymptomatic testing is so crucial in our fight against the virus, and why I'm so grateful to see the British diagnostics industry use their ingenuity and expertise in our shared purpose to protect our communities.

Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection Baroness Dido Harding said:

I am really pleased that we have been able to work with SureScreen to ensure we have a British supplier for this vital testing technology. Lateral Flow Tests are playing an ever increasing role in our testing programme as we continue to expand testing to find positive cases amongst those without symptoms. Having a British manufacturer provides greater certainty that we will be able to continue to grow our supply of these important tests

David Campbell, Director of SureScreen, said:

We believe our rapid antigen tests can really help in screening people both in the community and in clinical settings. Routine

testing is crucial to help business and schools as well as hospitals and GPs. We are delighted to be working with DHSC on this project and that our tests have been recognised by the Government and its scientists. We look forward to doing all we can to help the UK going forward in 2021.

Under the Government's Winter Plan, NHS Test and Trace is already deploying hundreds of thousands of rapid tests to identify asymptomatic cases in care homes, across the NHS, in critical infrastructure workplaces and food manufacturers, and in partnership with local Directors of Public Health.

In addition to this, the Government's Community Testing Programme is providing asymptomatic testing through local authorities across the UK. The SureScreen tests will form part of this important asymptomatic testing activity.

The valuable partnerships being created with companies such as SureScreen Diagnostics are further contributing to the resilience of the UK, both through supporting the work of UK diagnostics manufacturers and by harnessing the possibilities opened up by rapid regular testing.