

Home testing pilots for five court sites

- Government-backed home testing pilot to run for five weeks from five court sites
- Pilots to run from courts in Birmingham, Croydon, Liverpool, Snaresbrook and Wolverhampton
- Pilot follows launch of on-site rapid testing at Manchester and Southwark courts, with more sites to follow in coming weeks

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has launched a pilot to trial the use of home testing kits among court users. The pilot is part of the government's ongoing UK-wide drive to increase the availability of testing and help stop the spread of COVID-19.

This pilot will inform HMCTS' future plans for workplace testing and follows the recent launch of two on-site rapid testing pilots at [Manchester Civil Justice Centre](#) and [Southwark Crown Court](#). Both pilots have been extended to last until 23 April 2021. More than 600 people have been tested at these sites so far, and results of the plans will inform a wider roll out, with aims to introduce more on-site rapid testing court sites across the country.

From this week, and for the next five weeks, the home testing kits will be available to collect on-site from Birmingham Crown Court, Croydon Combined Court, Liverpool Combined Court QEII, Snaresbrook Crown Court and Wolverhampton Combined Court.

The kits include lateral flow tests, and will be offered to all professional court users, legal professionals, judiciary, contractors, jurors, witness services and staff who attend scheduled hearings at the pilot sites. Each kit comprises either three or seven tests, with results available immediately afterwards.

Rapid tests are easy to use and can give results in 30 minutes, so those who test positive can self-isolate immediately and avoid passing the virus on to others.

Around one in three people with coronavirus don't have symptoms, don't realise they're infected, and are unlikely to get tested or self-isolate. This means they can spread the virus without knowing it. Regular, rapid testing plays a critical role in safer working, stopping the spread of the virus, and is key to breaking the chains of transmission.

Kevin Sadler, Acting CEO of HMCTS, said:

Our courts and tribunals have been operating throughout the pandemic to ensure justice is maintained and accessible to complainants, victims, witnesses and defendants.

We are pleased to be working across government on these pilots for workplace testing and are looking at how we can roll testing out further to court users.

A further roll out of testing across our system is likely to be a combination of local authority testing facilities, on-site testing, and home testing kits.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

We've already come so far since first setting up a national testing programme at an unprecedented pace to help counter COVID-19, but we continue to strive to go further, faster.

Lateral flow tests hold the key to the next phase of our ambition to see rapid testing available to people across the country.

I'm delighted that HM Courts & Tribunals Service are working with us to use the latest technology in Birmingham, Croydon, Liverpool, Snaresbrook and Wolverhampton, and I look forward to seeing the fruits of their labour, both in helping target the virus locally, and helping find ways to roll this technology out further.

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

The innovation and evolution of NHS Test and Trace continues to improve our detection of positive cases and I am incredibly proud of the speed at which we have been able to roll out these initiatives to protect more people more quickly. This is a national effort and a partnership of public and private sectors is instrumental in our response to this virus.

Around one in three people with COVID-19 don't display symptoms, meaning you can infect others unknowingly. This rapid testing programme with HM Courts & Tribunals Service will inform our understanding of how rapid asymptomatic testing can be operationalised in the real world to protect those at high risk, find the virus and help us go back to as normal a way of life as possible.

Extensive clinical evaluation has been carried out on the lateral flow tests. Evaluations from Public Health England and the University of Oxford show these tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community for screening and surveillance purposes.

Once the test gives a result, individuals are expected to register their results via NHS Test and Trace. If the test gives a positive result, the

court user will be required to follow [NHS advice on self-isolating](#) and take a confirmatory PCR test. Anyone receiving a negative test should continue to follow the social distancing guidelines for their area, following Hands, Face, Space, and avoiding risky behaviours.

Every building we operate – including our [Nightingale courts](#) – meets the government's COVID-secure guidelines, and public health experts have confirmed our arrangements remain sufficient to deal with the new variants of the virus.