

# Statement from Chief Medical Adviser for NHS Test and Trace, Susan Hopkins on community testing

Press release

Chief Medical Adviser for NHS Test and Trace, Susan Hopkins, on the importance of testing those without symptoms.



We now know that around one in three people who have coronavirus never show any symptoms but that does not mean they are not infectious.

We need to use everything at our disposal to find these individuals without symptoms and support them and their contacts to isolate in order to break the chains of transmission.

That is why the community testing offer is being expanded to all local authorities with a particular focus on workplace testing. This expansion will help keep workers safe by finding those who are infectious while protecting vital services and supporting employers to ensure their businesses to operate. Community testing plans are designed by local authorities and supported by national infrastructure. Directors of Public Health with their detailed local knowledge and data can ensure that the tests are targeted to have the greatest impact.

Community testing will use lateral flow devices (LFDs) to test for coronavirus (COVID-19). These devices, which can give a rapid result in under 30 minutes without the need for laboratory testing, can help identify people who have high levels of virus and no symptoms who would not otherwise be coming forward for a test.

Moreover, because these tests detect cases with high levels of virus, they are effective in finding individuals who are the most likely to transmit the disease. Every positive individual detected can break a chain of transmission once these individuals and their contacts isolate for 10 days. Local authorities can support individuals who need to isolate by providing help

with shopping, collecting medicine from the pharmacy and other vital services.

An increase of asymptomatic testing will help find more cases and support critical industries. Increased asymptomatic testing will allow those playing essential roles to keep the country moving.

Lateral flow devices alone aren't a silver bullet for stopping the spread of the virus but we know they can help detect large numbers of positive cases quickly. They are another vital tool to help us combat coronavirus.

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