

Seasonal workers to receive free Covid-19 tests on farms

The government has today (29 March) called on employers of seasonal agricultural workers to help keep the nation safe and restrict the spread of Covid-19 by registering for free workplace testing.

This follows [the introduction of a new bespoke testing regime for international arrivals](#) this weekend, which extended the supply of free Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests to employers of seasonal agricultural workers in the edible horticulture sector. These workers play a vital role across many of our farms, picking fruit and vegetables and helping to feed the nation.

Under this new bespoke testing regime, international arrivals who are in the country for longer than two days will be required to take a test before the end of day two and to take a further test every three days – typically on days five and eight. Those who receive a positive test result will be required to take a further PCR test for variant surveillance.

Seasonal agricultural workers will be able to access these tests through several routes, including home tests and community testing sites. They should remain on the farm for the 10 days after they arrive, except where necessary to access testing.

Employers of seasonal agricultural workers who register for workplace testing can now access free tests to help meet this testing requirement, which will protect growers from having to take on the greater costs of regular PCR testing, which could save an estimated £10m for growers across the country.

[Farming Minister Victoria Prentis has written to employers of seasonal workers today](#), encouraging them to take up this offer and register to deliver regular testing of their workers. Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus don't have symptoms, so workplace testing will help to identify individuals who may be carrying the virus without knowing it, and allow employers to take the necessary action to stop the virus spreading amongst their workforce.

Writing to growers across the country today, Farming Minister Victoria Prentis said:

I am immensely grateful for the resilience our growers have shown throughout the last year, meeting the challenges of the pandemic and going above and beyond to help keep the nation fed.

Now, as we look towards resuming a more normal way of life, we must stay vigilant and do what we can to ensure we continue to operate as safely as possible.

Regular testing protects businesses, helps keep workers safe and is vital to our continuing recovery. I urge our farmers and growers to work with us to protect their workforces, their businesses and our food supply.

The tests can be carried out at a designated workplace site, and for businesses of over 10 people, employers can dispense those tests for staff to take at home. If positive results come back, staff must take swift action to isolate and undertake a confirmatory Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test.

In addition, those overseas looking to work within the edible horticulture sector will be able to undertake the mandatory two week quarantine period on the farm, meaning they can carry out certain tasks under Covid-safe conditions during that time. This has already proved to be vitally important for the sector, with government taking action to ensure that pickers were able to get straight to work gathering last year's harvest.

Employers must register for the programme by the 12 April to receive a supply of free test kits until the end of June.

[OPSS launches magnet safety campaign](#)

News story

OPSS is raising awareness of the potential dangers of small high-powered magnets to children and the steps you can take to make them safer.



There has been a growing number of cases where children and teenagers have suffered serious internal injuries after swallowing small, high-powered magnets. If swallowed, these magnets can pull together with enough force to cause serious and even life-threatening damage to the digestive system.

Supported by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, and the Child Accident Prevention Trust, OPSS

has produced safety messages on how to keep children safe.

Swallowing magnets can cause serious internal injuries

Keep products with small or loose magnets away from young children. Talk to older children about the dangers associated with putting magnets near, or in their mouths, or swallowing them.

Look for signs of magnet ingestion

Does your child have stomach pain, vomiting or fever? Check if they have been playing with magnets.

If you suspect your child has swallowed magnets

Take them to A&E straight away or call 999.

These important safety information messages will appear across our social media platforms and can be supported using the hashtag #MagnetSafety.

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

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[Recruitment of members for the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group](#)

News story

We are seeking 5 new members. The closing date for applications is Monday, 12 April 2021.



The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group (BFEG) provides independent ethical advice to Home Office ministers on issues related to the collection, use, and retention of biometrics, and forensic material, including digital forensic data. The BFEG also advises on ethical issues in the use of large and complex data sets, including the application of machine learning and artificial intelligence.

We are seeking 5 new members with expertise in evaluating and considering ethical issues in data ethics, digital forensics or relevant areas of law or social sciences,

All successful candidates will possess strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively with committee members and stakeholders. Successful candidates will be able to actively and constructively contribute to discussions, negotiating between conflicting opinions and values and generating options to reach consensus.

For further information and how to apply please [visit the public appointments website](#).

The closing date for applications is Monday, 12 April 2021.

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[**Dstl holds first ever virtual work experience sessions**](#)

Students aged 14 to 19 will take part in sessions which will run over three days and will provide an introduction to Dstl and the science inside UK defence and security, including key areas of work in chemistry, space, psychology, cyber and energetics.

Dstl is partnering with educational equality charity [Speakers for Schools](#) to offer virtual work experiences for young people across the UK. While in-

person placements are not possible, virtual work experiences continue to connect young people with the world of work and open their minds to the possibility of a career in a sector they may not have considered.

Jaime Williamson, heads up Early Careers for Dstl, and said:

We are thrilled to be able to offer this unique experience, particularly during a time where it is almost impossible for schools and colleges to enable real life work experience. Although students can't be at one of our sites in person, they will get to virtually meet real life defence scientists and find out about some of the exciting science projects they are working on. They'll be developing their employability skills too, as we'll be setting exciting interactive challenges relating to each of the work areas.

Dstl has partnered with Speakers for Schools, a charity founded by ITV's Political Editor Robert Peston and supported by the Law Family Charitable Foundation. Speakers for Schools aims to end educational inequality by giving young people access to the same networks as the top fee-paying schools in the UK through inspirational talks and work placements.

Jason Elsom, Chief Executive Officer, Speakers for Schools, said:

We are delighted to see leading employers like Dstl on board with Speakers for Schools and joining our mission to end educational inequality. We hope more employers join our virtual work experience programme and more schools sign up to broaden the horizons of young people across the UK.

Dstl's Matt Romang, who organised the week's activities, said:

We couldn't have done this without the support of the team at Speakers for Schools. They've been able to promote our opportunity nationally, which has attracted a really diverse group of students to join us this week. We'll be working with them to hear what the students think of their experience at Dstl so that we can learn and improve. We're aiming to run 2 more sessions over the next year, showcasing a different range of work areas each time.

[Find out more about virtual work experience.](#)

Highways England new non-executive director appointed

Press release

Highways England has announced the appointment of Lawrence Gosden as a non-executive director to the Board.



Highways England has appointed Lawrence Gosden as a non-executive director to the Board.

Lawrence will take up his post on 1 April and brings with him a wealth of leadership experience from a career centred on asset management, capital delivery and operations, primarily in the utilities sector. He is currently Director of Strategy and Asset Management at Southern Water.

He has a wide range of experience in managing large scale infrastructure and complex transformation programmes, creating alliances and shaping multi-billion capital investment programmes.

Announcing his appointment, Highways England Chairman Dipesh J Shah said:

I am delighted to welcome Lawrence to the Board. Now, more than ever, our infrastructure schemes have an important and perhaps unique role to play in helping our economy to recover. Lawrence's extensive experience will help us on our journey to transform how we work with our supply chain, how we deliver our net zero carbon and how we realise our digitalisation ambitions. His commitment to diversity and championing women in engineering and construction, will help us continue to build an inclusive and diverse business.

Speaking of his appointment, Lawrence said:

I am delighted to be joining the Board at such an exciting time.

Highways England has an important role to play in helping the economy to recover in a post-Covid and Brexit environment. We have an opportunity to engage with our customers about all our exciting future plans. I am looking forward to seeing how we can connect our customers with the great things we do including how digital technology will improve our road networks. I am also looking forward to helping the Board and the business work with our supply chain to meet these exciting challenges.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

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