

UKHSA ramps up testing availability following record week for distribution

The UK's testing programme is the biggest in Europe with nearly 400 million tests carried out to date, twice the number in France and more than 4 times the number in Germany. So far this week around 400,000 test kits have been delivered to people's homes each day to help combat the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

By Saturday 18 December, 900,000 deliveries a day will be made to ensure that even more people can order either a PCR or LFD test directly to their home.

As well as the rapid expansion in delivery capacity to people's homes, UKHSA is also increasing test availability at pharmacies, PCR testing sites and local authorities.

More lateral flow tests will be available across the UK in local community pharmacies to collect. Pharmacies are now able to access 10.5 million lateral flow tests per week, an increase of 5.5 million tests per week.

Booking slots for PCR testing sites will also increase by up to 100,000 per day from tomorrow (Thursday 16 December), especially in areas where booking slots have been filled.

To ensure a good testing supply over the coming weeks, UKHSA is working to secure hundreds of millions more LFD tests and an increase in PCR laboratory testing capacity of up to 150,000 tests per day.

UKHSA chief executive Dr Jenny Harries said:

We are very grateful to the public for stepping up and ordering tests to identify cases and protect themselves and others.

Now, this huge operational effort will mean that almost one million people will benefit from ordering COVID-19 tests directly to their homes, every day. I want to thank everybody at the Royal Mail for their incredible response helping us deliver this massive effort at their busiest time of the year.

Vaccination remains critical to help us bolster our defences against becoming severely ill – please remember to get your first, second, third or booster life-saving jab without delay to protect yourself, your families and your communities.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Our testing programme is the biggest in Europe and we know that

demand for tests is growing further with the arrival of the Omicron variant.

I'm delighted that Royal Mail is expanding our distribution service which will mean over 900,000 PCR and LFD test kits can be delivered to homes across the country every single day.

It's vital we all play our part in the national effort to tackle Omicron by getting tested if we have symptoms and using LFDs daily if we're a close contact of a case.

Nick Landon, Chief Commercial Officer at Royal Mail, said:

Royal Mail is proud to support the NHS with the collection and delivery of test kits across the whole of the UK, as we have since the start of the pandemic.

We have been in regular contact with UKHSA regarding the increased demand for test kits this week and are extending capacity at their request.

We continue to prioritise test kits for delivery and collection daily including the 35,000 priority postboxes and Sunday collections from over 15,000 priority postboxes.

Further information on the number of LFD and PCR tests carried out daily are published on the [COVID-19 dashboard](#).