Covid-19: Community testing rolled out for Uttlesford residents

Community testing for those who do not have symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) will shortly be available in Uttlesford.

From tomorrow (13 January) anyone without symptoms can pick up a free test – known as a PCR test – for themselves or people in their immediate family/support bubble from Turpin's Indoor Bowling Club in Saffron Walden or the Rowena Davey Centre in Great Dunmow. They can then do the test at home, register it online, before dropping it back to the same centre for it be sent off for processing. No appointment is needed.

Part of a joint programme with Essex County Council and the Department for Health and Social Care, the tests are for anyone who lives or works in Uttlesford. They are particularly targeted at key workers, those who have informal caring roles and those who cannot work from home, although no-one will be prevented from taking a test.

These sites are being set up in every district/borough in Essex, although Uttlesford is the only district with two sites.

The increased testing will help prevent and reduce transmission of Covid-19 in the community. Cllr Petrina Lees, Uttlesford District Council's Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health, said: "Around 1 in 3 people with the virus have no symptoms, so could be spreading it without knowing. The PCR testing programme is designed to identify these people so they can self-isolate.

"Community testing means anyone can get a test and play their part in keeping others safe. The more people we can test, the better we can fight the virus in our local area."

The two PCR testing sites in the District will initially be open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, for people to collect and drop-off tests. The district council has set these sites up with very short notice and opening hours are initially in line with availability of staff. The council hopes to extend the opening hours should demand and test kit availability permit. People are reminded that they must stick to social distancing rules and wear a mask while on site.

Anyone who has Covid-19 symptoms – a high temperature, new or continuous cough, or a loss or change of taste or smell – or who is isolating must not go to either of these sites, but instead apply online for a postal test or an appointment at an established drive-through testing site.

People should also not have a test if they have previously tested positive via a PCR test in the last 12 weeks, as this can give a false result.

It is likely that there will be further changes to the testing programme as the government scales up its testing regime.

PCR tests

The test involves a swab from the nose and mouth, which people do at home before packaging it up to return to the centre. The test will then be sent to a lab for analysis.

Before returning to the centre, people must register their details online following the instructions provided with the test. Results are then sent to them using these details. The results may take up to five working days to be sent through.

For those without internet access, a carer or support bubble member can register on their behalf, visit a testing centre or call NHS 111 to discuss what options are available to them.

To find out more about community testing, visit www.uttlesford.gov.uk/community-testing. For information on Covid-19 generally, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

ENDS

NOTES

- For more details on this media release please contact the Communications Team on 01799 510442 or media@uttlesford.gov.uk
- Follow us on Twitter @Uttlesford DC
- You can also follow our Business Development Team @UDCBusiness, our Communities Team @UDCCommunities, and our jobs feed @UDCJobs
- The Chair of the council is on Twitter and can be found @UDCChair
- Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook/UttlesfordDC