Dear Professional Court User

You might be aware that we are establishing a lateral flow device testing (rapid testing) pilot site at Manchester Civil Justice Centre. We are providing you with this brief to keep you updated with our progress so far.

**Why are we having test sites within our court building?**

HMCTS is very keen to support The Department of Health & Social Care’s national testing programme to identify individuals within the population who are positive for COVID-19 but do not present symptoms. Identifying asymptomatic positive cases and informing them to self-isolate will reduce the spread of the virus. There are many public sector departments contributing to the national public health imperative to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and we want to explore how effective asymptomatic testing will be in our settings.

Lateral flow testing will supplement our existing suite of Covid secure measures. Testing asymptomatic individuals will help to control the impact of Covid-19 on court hearings and provide additional reassurance to the public that our buildings are safe.

**What are we doing?**

There will be a pilot test site operating from the 1st floor of Manchester Civil Justice Centre with effect from 29 January 2021 for a period of four weeks. The test site has been established in accordance with DHSC standard operating procedures and guidance. All staff, judiciary, contractors, professional and public court users will be offered the opportunity to book a voluntary lateral flow test (LFT).

The tests will only be available to those who are attending the building for a scheduled hearing (this will not be a public test centre and we do not anticipate any footfall increase) and those not showing any symptoms. The access rules to the court and the Covid-secure measures will not be relaxed - in particular, anyone symptomatic will not be granted access to the building as is currently the case. Those testing negative will still be required to follow the “hands, space, face” guidance.

Judiciary, staff and contractors (touchpoint cleaners and security) in public facing roles will be offered a test twice per week, this is because these roles have the highest risk of causing significant operational disruption in cases where the individual tests positive for Covid-19. It’s not practical for us to do this for everyone, but we expect that all other staff, professional and public court users who have business in the court will be able to access a test in the course of the day, should they wish to do so.

**How will it affect you?**

You will be offered the opportunity to book a test slot. You must not eat or drink for at least 30 minutes prior to having your test. When you attend the test site, you will be asked to register your details on the NHS portal using your smartphone or a registration device, this includes providing your consent to take the test. The Data Privacy Notice explains how NHS Test and Trace will use your data (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronaviruscovid-19-testing-privacy-information>).

The test will be self-administered using a lateral flow device testing kit; they are quick and easy: they are taken using a swab of your throat and/or nose and shouldn’t be painful.

Trained personnel specifically recruited to manage the testing site will supervise those taking a test and process the results.

All staff (including cleaners) working within the testing site will be wearing PPE at all times.

After you have taken your test, you will be free to circulate around the court building in accordance with your purpose for being in the building; our existing Covid-secure measures will mitigate against the risk of transmission. This approach is in line with the national testing programme. All our sites are Covid-secure – and are not close contact settings – and following the hands-space-face guidance remains the most important thing that we can all do to prevent the spread of the virus.

Your result will be communicated to you after 30 minutes by NHS Test & Trace via text message and/or an e-mail using the contact details recorded during the registration process. The wording of the result text will reflect the national guidance published by the NHS. Please be aware that due to the anonymous process (results are processed using a barcode) we will not be made aware of your test result.

The result of the test is valid at the point in time that the test is taken. Rapid testing does not confirm that an individual has Covid-19, it will give an indication whether an individual is infectious.

If you test negative, then the viral load is not indicative of being infectious.

If you test positive following an LFT you should notify a senior person on site. You will be required to leave the court building and return home quickly and directly.  You must follow the [*Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) and self-isolate.

**How can I book a test?**

When you arrive at the court for your hearing, please go to the test site on Floor 1, where you will be advised of the available slots for the day.

**Where to get more information**

If you would like further information regarding the testing regime, please contact: mcrcjctfm@justice.gov.uk

Please note that we will be releasing further communications locally and nationally in the coming days via the intranet and other methods.