

Regular Rapid Covid-19 Testing

As you will be aware, NHS Test and Trace announced earlier last week, that all adults in households with school and college age children without symptoms can now access regular rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. This means you as a parent or guardian and any other adults in your household, who do not have symptoms, can now access regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. This includes childcare and support bubbles.

Undertaking regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing helps reduce transmission of the virus. **Up to 1 in 3 people** who have coronavirus (COVID-19) have no symptoms and could be spreading it without knowing. Tests are fast, easy and completely free.

There are different ways for a household, childcare or support bubble to collect their test to take at home, twice-weekly:

- your employer if they offer testing to employees
- Community Testing via an asymptomatic testing site- you can book a test at one of Stoke-on-Trent's 17 community venues by going to www.stoke.gov.uk/bookacovid19test
- by collecting a home test kit from a Collection Point- the Government's national testing sites in Stoke-on-Trent are Stoke City FC (Bet 365 Stadium), Synectics Solutions Ltd (beside Port Vale FC) and Fenton Manor Sports Complex. The national testing sites are open each day from 1.30pm to 7pm. You don't need to make an appointment. Please note you shouldn't visit outside of these hours because testing of symptomatic people will be taking place.
- by ordering a home test kit online- you can do this by visiting www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

How do I report my test result?

You should report your results online straight away, even if your result is negative or void. It's easy to do at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result. Results can also be reported via telephone by calling 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day, 7am to 11pm.

What do I do if I test positive?

If you test negative, you can continue to go to work, but you should still strictly follow all other government guideline. If you, your household or bubble test positive, you should all self-isolate immediately. **Do not send your child to school if somebody in your household had tested positive.** The person who has tested positive should take a confirmatory PCR test by booking though <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>, or by calling 119 and then follow the NHS Test and Trace guidance.

If I have symptoms should I take this test?

Please remember this type of testing is for the asymptomatic, if you have one or more of the following symptoms or have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace then you are not eligible for rapid result testing and should instead book a test through <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>, or by calling 119:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

What support is available to me as a parent if I test positive?

You can access Stoke-on-Trent's City Council's #StokeonTrentTogether support service if you need help because you're shielding, self-isolating or struggling due to the pandemic. They can help with things such as collecting prescriptions, dog walking and doing your food shopping. You can contact them via phone 0800 561 5610, which is open Monday to Thursday, 9am - 5pm and Friday, 9am - 4.30pm.

A 24-hour mental health helpline was established in November by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Brighter Futures. It can provide support if you're struggling with your mental health and need somebody to talk to and to listen to you. Please call 01782 234233 to access help 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

There are lots of other brilliant support services across the city that can help with a wide range of issues you may be facing during these tough times. Please go to www.stoke.gov.uk/supportservices to find out more information about some of them.

If you have tested positive, you can check to see if you are eligible for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment by visiting www.gov.uk/test-and-trace-support-payment.

Testing is voluntary, but strongly recommended to all who are eligible. Alongside the vaccine, washing hands, wearing face coverings, and maintaining social distancing, rapid testing plays a vital role in reducing transmission rates. Getting into the habit of regular testing as part of our everyday lives will help us all to play our part and do what we can to protect each other.

If you have any queries about the tests, please call 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm.