

Dear Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licence Holder, Operator & Trade Representative,

Asymptomatic testing - targeted at 'critical workers' who cannot work from home.

I am writing to let you know that the council has been working closely with our partners in the health service to set up three local COVID-19 asymptomatic (symptom-free) targeted testing centres for 'critical workers' who cannot work from home.

As the Director of Public Health for Bolton, I have identified the licensed private hire and hackney carriage trade including private hire operator booking staff, as a priority group to be included in this programme. Priority groups have been identified where there are 'critical workers' who cannot work from home. We are using the Government's definition of 'critical workers' which was recently updated.¹

This testing programme will help to identify people who are not displaying any coronavirus symptoms but who may still have the virus and could therefore pass it, unknowingly, to colleagues, passengers, and others. The sites have been established to help test 'critical workers' unable to work from home, to protect the workforce and ensure business continuity in vital services.

The testing sites, established, will use Lateral Flow Device tests (LFD) to provide results rapidly without the need for laboratory equipment. This means that the sites will have the capacity to conduct hundreds of tests a week.

Key points of the Asymptomatic Testing Programme

- The primary purpose is to identify asymptomatic (symptom-free) people to remove them quickly from work settings.
- A negative test result does not change any of the requirements to follow COVID safe measures – due to the risk of false negatives.
- The rapid tests cannot be used to release an individual from self-isolation. For example, if you have been identified as a close contact of somebody who has tested positive, you still need to follow the self-isolation guidance. A negative test would not change this. Please do not book to take a test when you are self-isolating – stay at home.

¹ Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings.

Who can be tested?

This is an asymptomatic programme (symptom-free) for 'critical workers' unable to work from home.

If you are displaying **any symptoms** of coronavirus, however mild, including a new, persistent cough, high temperature or loss of normal taste or smell, you must **not** turn up to any of the asymptomatic testing sites and should instead book a test through the normal process via the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

Further information about the testing programme can be found in the FAQs available here – www.bolton.gov.uk/testingmanagers

How can you take part?

If you are interested in taking part in this targeted testing programme please email boltontesting@bolton.gov.uk Upon registering your interest, we will share the details of how and when you can book appointments.

This quick and simple test will be crucial to ensure business continuity for vital services in Bolton and will help to protect you, colleagues and the wider community.

We hope that you will participate in this programme and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully

Dr Helen Lowey
Director of Public Health