

Lateral Testing Update

12th November 2020

You may already be aware that this week Essex County Council received news from the Secretary of State that the county will be one of the Local Authority areas that will receive access to a supply of lateral flow devices – rapid Covid-19 tests that can be self-administered and produce a result in around 15-30 minutes.

This is very positive news for Essex and particularly schools and other education settings that involve close contact between individuals. Lateral flow tests will speed up the process for identifying positive cases of the virus – particularly where an individual may not be displaying symptoms – meaning appropriate action can be taken more quickly and measures put in place to mitigate any potential risk of further spread.

Understandably you may have questions about what happens next and how colleagues can access these tests.

In the first instance, lateral flow tests will be available to priority and high-risk cohorts, as well as in areas where there is a higher prevalence of cases. I would like to assure you that all individuals working in an education setting are absolutely considered a priority group and that we are moving at pace with logistics for the roll out of the tests across the county.

We are expecting a consistent and weekly supply of the tests, starting from next week and working closely with partner organisations across the system on plans for distribution. I will be keeping you up to date with new developments as they happen and hope to be in touch with you shortly with more information about how and where you can access a test.

There is currently no expectation that children will be provided a test in this way, adults only.

In the meantime, please do continue to follow the appropriate government Covid-19 guidelines, as well as the process for notifying the county council and the Essex Contact Tracing Team if you are informed of a positive Covid-19 case within your setting or the wider school community.