

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 1 st Nov 2021	Meeting Name: Health and Wellbeing Board
Report title:		Update on Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing in Southwark (Rapid Antigen Test)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All Southwark wards and all population groups	
From:		Jin Lim, Deputy Director of Public Health Paul Stokes, Head of Programme - Health Improvement	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the report.

SUMMARY

2. The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to the provision of rapid lateral flow device (LFD) testing (also referred to as rapid antigen test) across Southwark.
3. LFD testing are used for asymptomatic case finding and is an important element of the Southwark Outbreak Prevention Plan to keep our borough safe. Appendix 1 describes what LFDs are.
4. A full range of LFD test provision has been established across the borough to ensure good and easy access to rapid testing for all communities and in all parts of the borough.
5. This provision is funded by DHSC and is subject to DHSC national review. The collaboration agreement with DHSC commits to the current funding model until 31st December 2021.
6. PCR testing is provided directly by DHSC and is mainly used for symptomatic testing. Appendix 2 describes what PCR tests are.

CONTEXT

7. Lateral flow device (LFD) tests are an important key part of the prevention plan as set out in Southwark's Outbreak Prevention Control Plan to keep our population safe
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/southwark-outbreak-prevention-and-control-plan-opcp>
8. They are also referred to as rapid antigen tests. The LFD tests are used in asymptomatic testing of the Sars Cov 2 virus and tests for viral antigen. The tests involve a throat and nasal swab (the newer generation test is just nasal) and give rapid results using a device similar to a pregnancy test. Research shows that the test are 99.9% accurate. This means the

chance of getting a false positive result (where the result shows as positive but is actually negative) is very low.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/>

9. If the LFD test is positive, a confirmatory PCR test is required. If you are symptomatic, you should get a PCR test. In Southwark, PCR tests can be home delivered or carried out at a Local Test Site or Mobile Test Unit. The PCR Local Test Sites are at Burgess Park (7 days) and Bel Air Park (7 days). The PCR Mobile Unit is at Canada Water (Deal Porter Square) and Elephant & Castle (Walworth Square)
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/get-a-free-covid-19-test/book-a-test-if-you-have-symptoms>
10. Currently, the public health advice is to test regularly even if you are asymptomatic (twice a week ideally) using the rapid LFD test kits, as business and social activities resume. Regular testing for asymptomatic infections will help keep infection rates low, and reduce the risk of transmission to more vulnerable relatives, friends and colleagues. It is especially suggested that you test regularly if you are not able to maintain social distance such as in crowded spaces and / or meet with more vulnerable people such as older people and people with long-term health conditions.
11. Easy access to rapid testing is also important to keep transmission down and protect those neighbourhoods and populations where we know there is lower take up of vaccination.
12. The diagram (Figure 1) below summarises the approach to providing rapid LFD testing in Southwark.



Figure 1 Targeted LFD testing approach in Southwark

13. Rapid LFD test kits are easily and widely accessible in the community in Southwark. The diagram (Figure 2) illustrates the different lateral flow device testing pathways for the borough.

- **Schools and Universities** – are able to access LFD test kits directly from DfE. Where there are supply issues or requests for assisted testing, the Council is able to help.
- **NHS and Care Settings** – are able to access LFD kits directly from DHSC. Where there are supply issues, the SELCCG is able to help.
- **Community access**
 - *Pharmacies*: for collection for self-swab home testing and for supervised testing
<https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits>
 - *Asymptomatic Test sites*: supervised testing at test sites in the north of the borough (London Bridge Station), centre of the borough (Bournemouth Road, Peckham), and at the Mobile Test Unit (which rotates to town centres for eg. Peckham Square, Camberwell Green, Elephant & Castle, and to housing estates).
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/get-a-free-covid-19-test/book-a-test-if-you-don-t-have-symptoms/mass-testing>

- **Targeted settings (assisted testing):** The MTU or additional staff may also be deployed to support targeted assisted/supervised testing in for example specific events or as part of a response to an incident / outbreak. The targeted deployment is informed by surveillance data and agreed via Incident Meetings, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) or the Director of Public Health.
- **Community collect points:** rapid LFD self-swab test kits can be collected for home use at local pharmacies and at local libraries across the borough.
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/get-a-free-covid-19-test/book-a-test-if-you-don-t-have-symptoms/community-collect>
- **Door Drop:** the Southwark Young Advisors target neighbourhoods with a door drop of self-swab LFD test kits informed by the Surveillance Reports provided by the Public Health Intelligence Team. These might be areas of higher transmission, lower vaccination take up or other risk factors (eg higher levels of poor health and wellbeing). The Council is also able to respond to requests for a 'drop' of rapid LFD test kits from key organisations (such as universities, schools or 'at risk' businesses') in response to outbreak management.
- **Home delivery:** rapid self-swab home test kits can be directly ordered for home delivery from the DHSC website or 119
<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Southwark Lateral Flow Testing (as at 30.10.21)

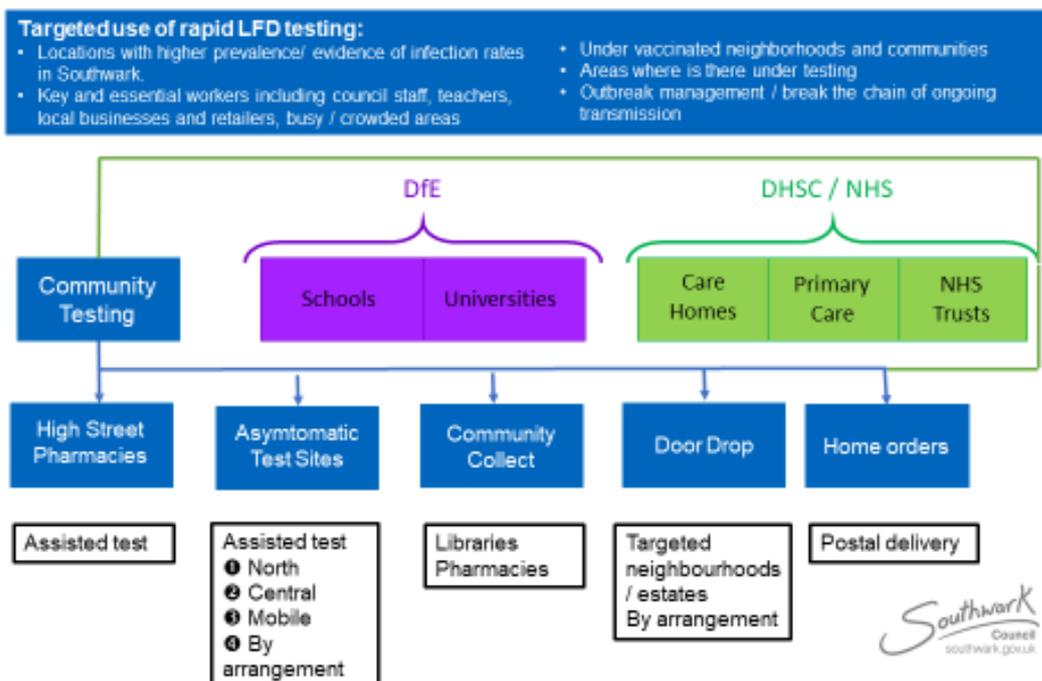


Figure 2 Lateral flow tests in Southwark (as at 13.10.21)

14. Every week, Southwark residents take a very high number of self-swab home lateral flow tests. Around half of all lateral flow tests taken by Southwark residents are self-swab home tests. In the week to the 29th September, almost 11,000 home LFD tests were taken.
15. Working-age adults consistently have the highest home testing rate which peaks within Southwark residents aged 18-29.
16. Children and those aged 60 and over having the lowest home test rates.
17. Uptake of lateral flow tests is currently highest among residents who live in wards in the Centre and the South of Southwark.

FUTURE OF RAPID LFD TESTING

18. The public health view is that the provision of rapid LFD test kits remains an important part of the prevention and control of Covid. The test kits need to be easily accessible and widely available in line with the approach outlined in Figure 1. This is especially important as we approach winter with other wider respiratory viruses circulating and the continued need to rapidly identify Covid infections in order to support isolation and control measures.
19. The current DHSC rate card funding model is confirmed until end of December 2021.
20. Local Authorities will continue to be reimbursed for actual costs incurred for delivery of the Testing up to a maximum of the rate card amount (i.e. the rate card amounts are caps) and shall otherwise be responsible for any additional costs which exceed that amount.
21. The Government's *COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan* (September 2021) emphasized that regular asymptomatic testing will continue to help find cases and break the chains of transmission and that rapid asymptomatic testing is an important tool to help reduce the spread of the virus, while supporting people to manage their own risk and the risks to others.
22. In the coming colder season months asymptomatic testing will be particularly focused on those who are not fully vaccinated, those in education, and those in higher-risk settings such as the NHS, social care, and prisons. Community testing will continue to support local authorities to focus on disproportionately-impacted and other high-risk groups.

23. The Government will therefore continue to provide the public with access to free lateral flow tests until the spring of 2022. Though at a later stage, as the Government's response to the virus changes, universal free provision of LFDs will end, and individuals and businesses using the tests will be expected to bear the cost.

Appendix 1 – WHAT ARE RAPID LATERAL FLOW DEVICE TESTS?

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Tests are a simple-to-use point of care solution for rapid COVID-19 testing. They test for antigen material without the need for laboratory processing. They involve (self) swabbing of throat and nose and application of a reagent and then 'reading' the results off a strip device. The swabs are self-administered and the application of reagent and 'reading' can be done, with training, by non-clinical staff / or at home.

Confirmatory testing for positives is currently required for LFTs. The confirmatory test is done using a PCR test.

Full instructions on doing a LFD test:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/how-to-do-a-test-at-home-or-at-a-test-site/how-to-do-a-rapid-lateral-flow-test/>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9XR8RZxKNo>



The Council Rapid LFD Test Mobile Unit in Peckham Square

Appendix 2 – What is PCR testing?

The PCR tests are mainly for people with symptoms, even if mild:

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

PCR testing should also be done if you've done a rapid lateral flow test and had a positive result or your test sample could not be read (void result)

If you've been in close contact with someone who's tested positive for COVID-19 you can get a PCR test, whether or not you have symptoms.

The PCR test involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud. You can do the swab yourself (if you are aged 12 or over) or someone can do it for you. Parents or guardians have to swab test children aged 11 or under.



For more information on PCR tests:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/>

To book a PCR test if symptomatic in Southwark:

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/get-a-free-covid-19-test>

PCR tests are provided directly by DHSC. PCR tests can be ordered for home delivery for home testing or accessed at a Local PCR Test Site in Southwark or other borough. The PCR test sites in Southwark are:

- Burgess Park Car Park – 7 days
- Bel Air Park Car Park – 7 days
- Elephant & Castle Walworth Square – mobile
- Canada Water – Deal Porter Square - mobile