

## Rapid testing trial begins for Bristol Port Key Workers

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The Bristol Port Company will be from today, the first workplace in Bristol to receive lateral flow (rapid) COVID-19 tests as part of the city's local testing programme.

From 17th December, 1,000 tests will be administered to key workers at Bristol Port as part of a pilot project to enable local public health teams to direct rapid asymptomatic testing to find cases early and to disrupt chains of transmission.

Lateral flow (rapid) testing kits have been issued to over 50 director of public health across England, with Bristol receiving 10,000 tests from NHS Test and Trace. Designed for critical occupational staff and settings, the first tests will be administered to a key group of critical Bristol Port staff who do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

Director of Public Health for Bristol, Christina Gray, said: "Lateral flow (rapid) testing is not mass testing of the population. This new local programme in Bristol is one element of a wider Government lateral flow (rapid) testing programme being deployed in a number of different settings; such as the health services, universities and care homes.

"We're taking a targeted approach to help to identify and break chains of transmission early, preventing outbreaks. Bristol Port is a setting where we believe repeat testing of key staff will be particularly beneficial. Staff without symptoms of coronavirus will be tested twice a week for three months. We will be reviewing the process throughout.

"If anyone does develop symptoms, they need to stay at home and book a test through the NHS Test and Trace system where tests are sent off to the lab to be analysed. We must all continue to focus on reducing the spread of the virus by limiting our contact with others, practising good hygiene and isolating when needed."

Key staff to be tested at Bristol Port include pilots, lockgate keepers, engineers, electricians and private ambulance staff, all which enable Bristol Port to continue to run smoothly and allow the supply chain to keep moving to get essential goods distributed around the UK. Three trained Port of Bristol employees will administer the tests, and once taken, they will be able to report results back to NHS Test and Trace after just 30 minutes.

David Brown, Chief Executive Officer for Bristol Port , said: “The Port is pleased to be able to support the trial of lateral flow testing. As Key workers it will give those involved in this trial some additional reassurance that asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 aren’t being transmitted around the port thereby ensuring it can continue to keep vital supplies flowing and also keep them and their families even safer.”

Lateral flow (rapid) testing has been undertaken by the universities for students and is available to Care home and NHS. Rapid testing will also begin at Sirona care and health settings with test kits provided directly by the NHS.

The council is also looking at ways to extend this type of testing in the New Year.

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