



Media Release

Date: 5 August 2021

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) and COVID-19

As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are continuing to expand our regular programme of testing for people who have a higher chance of being exposed to COVID-19.

Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs), also known as rapid diagnostic tests are part of the States of Guernsey's response to the pandemic and its commitment to controlling infection. Since we started using LFTs in March 2021, over 30,000 LFT tests have been carried out.

LFTs offer a means of quickly testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Rather than sending patient's samples to a laboratory, LFT kits are small, portable, and can be used with minimal training and in your own home.

Up to a third of individuals who test positive for coronavirus have no symptoms at all and can therefore spread it unknowingly. LFTs are used in **asymptomatic** people who would otherwise not be tested at all. Therefore, they are being used to serve a slightly different role to PCR tests, assisting in the early detection of asymptomatic people. The aim is to spot infectious people, who would otherwise be missed.

LFTs have a lower sensitivity compared to PCR which means some positive cases will be missed with this test. They are more likely to detect positive cases when viral loads are highest and patients are most infectious. Therefore, we recommend that LFTs are used twice a week *consistently* to achieve full effectiveness.

LFTs should not be used if a person has developed Covid-19 suspect symptoms, since the device may give a false-negative result and hence provide a false re-assurance. The tests are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes. Those who test positive must immediately self-isolate to avoid passing the virus on to others.

The States of Guernsey are now offering businesses in Guernsey, Alderney, Sark and Herm who operate in a High-risk of COVID-19 transmission; the opportunity to join the Lateral Flow Testing Programme. If your application is approved, LFTs will be allocated on a free of charge basis. Training will also be provided to ensure that all participants are using the LFT devices correctly.

LFTs should only be used according to the following objectives:

- Testing kits should only be used by the member of staff they have been allocated to
- The tests need to be carried out twice a week *consistently* in order to achieve full effectiveness
- **LFTs should not be used as an alternative to a PCR test. If you are experiencing any COVID symptoms – however mild -you should contact the Clinical Helpline and NOT use the LFT.**
- If the result is positive, please self-isolate immediately and contact the Clinical Helpline on 01481 756938 or 01481 756969 to arrange a confirmatory PCR Test.

Business must not use the LFTs to test customers whilst on their premises. This is not something that can be done safely.

Current sectors who can take part in the LFT testing programme are:

- Building and construction
- Customs/GBA
- Security
- Hospitality
- Ports and Harbours
- Public transport and taxi drivers
- Postal, freight and delivery
- Cosmetic and beauty
- Early years
- Food retail
- Retail (other)

The following may be considered based on whether close customer/client contact is unavoidable:

- Leisure and recreation
- Infrastructure and utilities
- Social and charitable work

If you would like to participate in the LFT Programme, please submit an application via email to the LFT Coordinator: Licinia.Goncalves@gov.gg or lateralflowqueries@gov.gg

We will continue to review the use of LFTs and a possible expansion of this programme to provide tests for our whole community – as is the case currently in England. However, for now our priority is to widen the LFT programme to businesses operating in environments with a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission as this provides the most benefit to our overall response strategy.

Ends