

Media Release

Date: 19 November 2021

East Arm facility to reduce PCR test waiting times for patients with Lateral Flow positives

From Monday 22nd November, the East Arm testing facility will be holding regular PCR testing 'drop-in' sessions, specifically for anyone who has tested positive on a Lateral Flow Device and is aged 12 or over.

These patients do not need to phone in advance or book a time, they simply need to turn up between 09.00 & 10.45 on weekdays at the East Arm facility. **They must bring their positive lateral flow.** If possible, they should also bring a smart device (Phone or tablet).

A self-swab PCR test will then be supervised by a member of the Welcome Team using the Local Test version of Travel Tracker. Those patients will then receive their PCR result in the normal way, by text if it is a negative result, or by way of a phone call from Public Health if their PCR test is positive.

Anyone attending the East Arm for testing should come in a vehicle, the facility cannot accept cyclists or those arriving on foot.

Anyone who is experiencing symptoms and who has not had a lateral flow positive must call the clinical helpline who will schedule a PCR test for them at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital testing facility.

By introducing this additional option for the testing of patients with lateral flow positives, it will help reduce waiting times for all patients needing a PCR test. These testing 'drop-in' sessions will run for two weeks (until 3 December) initially but may be extended if there is still high demand and pressure on the hospital testing facility.

Richard Evans, Director of the COVID-19 response said

"We know waiting times have increased recently as the number of cases has risen. We have a lot of other coughs and colds circulating too and we want to ensure people are tested quickly. All of that has meant the time we spend on hold when we call the helpline, and the time it takes for a test to be scheduled in, is getting longer. Our call-handlers and schedulers are working incredibly hard to keep the turnaround as fast as possible. But by introducing this new option, even though it's only suitable

for some patients, it will help relieve some of that pressure and speed things up all round.”

Ends