

29 April 2020

Coronavirus testing for Hertfordshire residents and employees

The range of locations and eligibility criteria for coronavirus (COVID-19) testing across Hertfordshire has been significantly extended, following the introduction of local arrangements supported by the military and new government guidance.

This should be particularly helpful for:

- people who live and work in Hertfordshire who are in the first three days of having suspected coronavirus symptoms (a fever and/or cough) and who have to go out to work
- NHS and social care staff and essential workers who are in the first three days of having coronavirus symptoms but who don't have access to their own transport
- NHS and social care staff and essential workers who are self-isolating for 14 days because a household member has suspected coronavirus symptoms.

Testing for coronavirus helps the government and scientists to understand its current spread and plan how to manage the pandemic, as well as enabling people who test negative to return to work more promptly.

Jim McManus, the Director of Public Health for Hertfordshire said:

“There are a number of different testing routes, depending on where you live, what your job is, how old you are, whether you have symptoms and if you have access to your own transport. We're waiting for detailed guidance to come from the government which will make it clear how some of the new testing plans will be delivered. In the meantime, we are very pleased to announce that drive-through testing at three Hertfordshire sites will be in operation every week for the foreseeable future. We are also pleased that the number of mail-order tests has been increased too, which means that people without transport should not be disadvantaged.”

In summary, testing arrangements are as follows:

For essential workers (as defined by the government at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)) and their household members aged over five with active symptoms who have access to their own transport:

- tests at Stansted, Wembley and a range of other locations across the country can be booked online now via an online portal at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. These are available every day of the week.

- drive-through tests will be available
 - on Saturdays between 10am and 4pm in Hertford at County Hall, SG13 8DQ
 - on Sundays between 10am-4pm in Watford at the Central Watford leisure centre, WD17 3HA
 - on Mondays at 10am-4pm in Stevenage at Hertfordshire County Council's office on Six Hills Way, SG1 2ST.

Booking details have not yet been confirmed for the three drive-through Hertfordshire sites. More information will be confirmed about these sites on the morning of Friday 1 May.

For all essential workers who are within the first three days of having suspected symptoms who do not have access to their own transport:

- a mail-order test can be requested through www.gov.uk/coronavirus

For NHS, social care and care home or nursing home staff only:

- local drive-through testing is available at Howard Court in Welwyn Garden City and at Harpenden Memorial Hospital in Harpenden. This testing route is exclusively for NHS and social care staff and their household members, to enable front-line staff to return promptly to work if their test results are negative.
- From Thursday 30 April, transport will be provided to take staff who do not have access to a car to either Howard Court or Harpenden Memorial Hospital to be tested.

For care home residents:

Testing is now in place for people with symptoms in care homes and nursing homes where there are two or more residents with suspected COVID-19 symptomatic residents. Tests are carried out within 24 hours and results are available within 72 hours.

Future plans

Plans are being put in place to enable:

- Everyone in England aged 65 and over with coronavirus symptoms to get tested, along with symptomatic members of their household
- All workers with suspected coronavirus symptoms who are unable to work from home to get tested
- All NHS and social care staff and care home residents who do not have symptoms to get tested

This will mean people who cannot work from home and those aged 65 and over can know for sure whether they have coronavirus and need to continue isolating.

As capacity has increased, testing has been offered to different groups in a phased approach, prioritising NHS workers.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Hertfordshire's local resilience forum (LRF) is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency, as well as other partners in the military and voluntary sector who provide a valuable contribution to LRF work in emergency preparedness.

The LRF plans and prepares for, and coordinates the response to, localised incidents and national emergencies. It works to identify potential risks and produces emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on local communities.