

# Covid update to include Workplace Rapid Testing

The Covid-19 pandemic has and continues to place demands on workers and workplaces in a way that was previously unimaginable. The great news is that the UK has already vaccinated over 2.5 million people and the latest vaccine to be authorised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will allow the acceleration of the vaccination programme even further, once doses become available from the spring.

Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent infectious diseases and there is little doubt that vaccines are the way out of this pandemic. The NHS has a clear vaccine delivery plan and will contact everyone when it's their turn but as the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock recently said – this will be a marathon, not a sprint, and we cannot let down our guard.

## Rapid Testing

Lateral flow tests, which give results in 30 minutes, have already been hugely successful in finding positive cases quickly – and every positive case found helps to stop the spread.

During the weekend the Government announced that regular testing for people without symptoms of coronavirus will be made available across the country from this week. This is a **community testing regime** and **Local Authorities** will be encouraged to target testing to people who cannot work from home during lockdown. This programme is crucial given that around 1 in 3 people have coronavirus without displaying any symptoms and it will help to protect our community vital services.

Whilst we are still very much pushing the Government's message that the single most important action we can all take, is to stay at home, Lincoln Occupational Health recognises that many workplaces may wish to understand more about rapid testing and whether such testing could assist them move towards a Covid secure workplace.

Lincoln Occupational Health has therefore designed a service to help clients address the many issues which need careful attention before rapid testing can be considered such as:

Various courses can be offered such as the following:

- ▶ **Which of the available tests are most likely to give best results and be used properly by staff and what are the training requirements?** (Please note that whilst there are many lateral flow tests on the market, there are currently only three UK Government approved rapid antigen tests).
- ▶ **What is the aim of testing for the company and on what basis would this be carried out e.g. voluntary/mandatory?**
- ▶ **What does a positive test mean regarding isolation for the individual, their household and for workplace contacts?**
- ▶ **What process is in place for a confirmation PCR test following a positive lateral flow test bearing in mind this won't be part of the Government's scheme and the person may be asymptomatic so a private test may be appropriate.**
- ▶ **Is there a reporting process for positive test results to be reported to Public Health England and for the potential need for RIDDOR reporting if positive cases may have arisen from work.**



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Other issues to consider include false positives, false negatives, false reassurance, user error, refusal to test, refusal to isolate, pay whilst isolating, impact on household members and their work/pay etc.

Lincoln Occupational Health would be happy to offer a service whereby you have an initial 45 min virtual consultation with our Occupational Health Consultant to discuss the above (this will be followed up with an email feedback and clarification). **The cost for this is £250 plus VAT.**

Following this, the option is there should you like further help from us to assist with the development of a robust risk assessment/standard operational procedure which we would strongly advise is agreed and in place prior to commencing any testing. Employment law advice associated with the above can also be provided separately.

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## About Us

We work with employers to provide support and practical guidance regarding effective management of sickness absence and other relevant employee health issues.

Our services aim to help you:

- ▶ avoid costly claims by ensuring you meet your legal and statutory responsibilities
- ▶ comply with Health and Safety and Disability legislation
- ▶ reduce the costs to your business of staff sickness absence
- ▶ prevent and remove health risks arising in the workplace
- ▶ achieve maximum staff productivity by reducing absences due to ill-health
- ▶ improve the overall health and wellbeing of your workforce
- ▶ increase your staff retention and productivity
- ▶ effectively manage employees who are off sick (especially long-term cases) and develop individual return-to-work strategies
- ▶ introduce cost-effective and proactive health promotion campaigns
- ▶ address complex stress and mental health cases.

## Contact detail

For further details please contact:



**Katie Eastwell**  
Managing Partner

**Tel** 0844 481 0093  
**Email** [kate@lincolnoccupationalhealth.co.uk](mailto:kate@lincolnoccupationalhealth.co.uk)  
**Website** [www.lincolnoccupationalhealth.co.uk](http://www.lincolnoccupationalhealth.co.uk)  
**Twitter** @LincolnHealth

Lincoln Occupational Health LLP  
PO Box 696, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 9WX

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Lincoln Occupational Health LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England & Wales. Partnership No. OC379274.  
Registered office: 2 Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, London WC2A 3TH.