

Symptom-free Testing Sites to Open Across Kent

Rapid-result coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for people who don't have symptoms is being rolled out across Kent this week.

The testing will find people who don't currently have symptoms, who may be unknowingly spreading the virus in the community and the sites are part of a rolling programme to help reduce the rates of transmission in Kent.

In addition to sites already running at Sheppey and Ramsgate, people can now book for tests from today (4 January), using the link <https://kcc.healthit.org.uk/covbook/home> at the following venues:

- Northfleet Youth Club, Hall Road, Gravesend DA11 8AJ
- Swanley Youth Club, St Mary's Road BR8 7BU
- Dover Discovery Centre, York St CT16 1PH
- Folkestone Library, 2 Grace Hill, Folkestone CT20 1HD
- Unit 1 Eurogate Business Park, Thomson Rd, Ashford TN24 8XW
- Kent Show Ground, Detling ME14 3JF
- Kemsley Community Centre, Ridham Avenue, Kemsley ME10 2SF
- The Centre, Birchington, Alpha Rd, Birchington CT7 9EG
- Sidney Cooper Gallery, 22-23 St Peter's St, Canterbury CT1 2BQ
- Larkfield Library Martin Square, Larkfield, ME20 6QW
- Fairfield Leisure Centre, Lowfield Street, Dartford DA1 1JB
- Assembly Hall Theatre, Crescent Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2LU

All symptom free testing sites will be open daily from 9am to 7pm Monday, starting on Thursday 7th January.

Key workers and their families have already been receiving invites to book as a priority to support the NHS and other frontline services.

From now (Monday 4th January), all members of the public who live or work in those areas are also able to book a test.

Once all 14 sites are open, there will be capacity for over 13,000 tests across Kent per day. Since opening on 17 December, there have been over 8,800 tests carried out at the sites in Sheppey and Ramsgate, helping to identify positive cases in the community and reduce the spread of the virus.

KCC Leader Roger Gough said: "I previously outlined four crucial actions that will help us get out of tier four restrictions – following the guidelines; symptom-free testing; contact tracing and enforcement. Rapid testing, combined with additional resources in contact tracing, means we will be able to make significant strides in identifying and containing the virus across the county.

"The symptom-free testing sites are being set up using funding from central government to support local councils in tier 4 to help reduce rates of COVID-19 and we have also received support from

the military. The opening of 14 sites has been a huge partnership effort between Kent County Council, central Government and the 12 district and borough councils. Another 10 sites are being planned for rollout in the coming weeks so we continue to do everything we can to help Kent out of this situation.”

Lieutenant Colonel James Cackett, Commanding Officer of the 320-strong Kent Resilience Unit* said: “The Kent Resilience Unit, which includes many soldiers from 36 Engineer Regiment based in Maidstone, is looking forward to delivering community testing to the people of Kent and supporting our partners in Kent County Council, protecting our communities from coronavirus this winter.”

Kent County Council Director of Public Health, Andrew Scott-Clark said: “It has been a logistically complex and challenging programme to rollout but symptom-free testing sites will help people to come forward and book themselves regular tests so we can find those who may be unknowingly transmitting the virus either at home or at work.

“Remember, up to 1 in 3 people may have COVID-19 without any symptoms at all and with this new strain that is more transmissible, we need to identify those people and encourage them to isolate so we break the chain of transmission.

“The message to everyone across Kent is to keep following the tier 4 restrictions and limit your social interactions. It's important to self-isolate, not only after receiving a positive test result but also while you wait for the results.”

To book a test, use this link: <https://kcc.healthit.org.uk/covbook/home>

Residents attending this testing will undergo a lateral flow swab test and will receive their result within a couple of hours of attending the test by text or email. If they are positive, they will be told to self-isolate, follow the national guidance and they will be instructed to have a PCR test to confirm their positive result. If they are negative, they must still continue to observe social distancing guidelines, wear a mask in public and regularly wash hands.

These sites are in addition to the regional and local testing sites for people who have symptoms. If you have symptoms you should NOT attend one of our symptom-free testing sites but instead book a PCR test <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

* The Kent Resilience Unit comprises of multiple Army units including personnel from 36 Engineer Regiment based in Maidstone.