

Message from the Sefton Director of Public Health to Parents and Carers

Dear parents and carers,

With national lockdown restrictions in place, it is as important as ever for people with COVID-19 symptoms to access testing and follow self-isolation rules. With lots of new information around COVID-19 on our television screens and in the news, we understand that it can often feel overwhelming. We wanted to provide you with some clear information around the types of COVID-19 tests available and when they should be taken.

Currently, there are two types of tests in general use. These are

- a. **Lateral Flow Tests (LFT)** that can be accessed via **SMART testing sites**. LFTs are for individuals **without symptoms** of COVID-19 and give a result in under an hour.
- b. **PCR Tests** that should be accessed via the **national booking system** at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119. PCR tests are for people **with symptoms** of COVID-19 and results will take longer to arrive.

It is essential that people get the correct test. People with COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild, should self-isolate and leave their home to get a PCR test only. This is because LFTs are less sensitive tests than PCRs, meaning that even with a negative LFT result you would still need to continue your self-isolation period.

Only go for an LFT test if you are still working or caring for someone outside your home. This includes people who are working in the public sector, public transport, supermarkets, schools and nurseries and businesses where you come into contact with other people.

Remember, the following actions will also help us to reduce the spread of COVID-19

1. **Staying at home as much as possible**
2. **washing your hands**
3. **following the national lockdown guidance**
4. **maintaining social distancing and using face coverings when you leave your home for essential purposes** – face coverings should cover the nose and mouth
5. **staying at home and getting tested if you have symptoms no matter how mild** – the main symptoms are a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

6. following self-isolation advice if you are the contact of a positive case or a household member of a symptomatic individual

If you have any questions about COVID-19, or the restrictions please do visit our website where you will find lots of information and advice at

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/covid-19-in-sefton/>

Many thanks for your support in helping us through these difficult circumstances.

Yours Sincerely

MARGARET JONES

Director of Public Health

Sefton Council