**What is Lateral Flow Testing?**

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) is a type of test to detect COVID-19. The test involves taking a swab from the nose and throat and provides a rapid result within 30 minutes on site, without the need to send the swabs to a laboratory for analysis. LFT provides a relatively simple way to test larger numbers of asymptomatic people regularly, and can help to identify employees with COVID-19 who need to self-isolate. It can also reduce employee absence by giving confidence that people do not have COVID-19.  The test is not 100% accurate but we have completed a successful pilot in the County’s secondary schools which found and continues to find positive cases in people who **were not showing any symptoms,** so a credible programme to rollout across the county.

**How can I access Lateral Flow Testing?**

Early Years PVI Settings come under the **Community Testing Programme** which is funded by central government but with delivery through Local Authorities and overseen by Directors of Public Health. In Cumbria, any staff from early years settings not covered by the national schools programme will be eligible to access Lateral Flow Testing via this community testing route.

The Community Testing Programme is currently in development by a dedicated project team at Cumbria County Council who are working towards rolling out lateral flow testing to priority sectors.

Community LFT testing will comprise a twin track model which involves both of the following approaches, each has its benefits depending on the setting

* **‘Train the trainer’** model in larger settings
* **Access to testing in community sites** for smaller settings

**Train the trainer update**

This option provides an opportunity to have staff from within your setting to be trained in order to supervise the testing in your workplace, and then following an initial set up process, you can conduct testing regularly within your own business setting at a time that is convenient to your working routines. To enquire about this please contact ask.lft@cumbria.gov.uk.

**Community sites update**

As the testing needs to take place under the correct test conditions and be supervised Cumbria County Council is identifying suitable numbers of people to work at the test sites. It is envisaged that access to these sites will be made available initially at least one evening per week and on a Saturday morning.

Community Testing sites are now live for PVI colleagues to access on an ongoing basis at:

**Trinity School Sports Hall**, Strand Rd, Carlisle CA1 1JB

* Wednesdays 17:45 – 19:30
* Saturdays 09:15 – 12:30

**Beacon Hill School**, Market Square, Aspatria, Wigton CA7 3EZ

* Saturdays 09:15 – 12:30

**Queen Katherine School,** Appleby Rd, Kendal LA9 6PJ

* Thursdays 17:45 – 19:30
* Saturdays 09:15 – 12:30

**Millom School,** Salthouse Road, Millom, LA18 5AB

* Saturdays 09:15 – 12:30

**Furness Academy**, Park Drive, Barrow-In-Furness, LA13 9BB

* Tuesdays 17:45 – 19:30
* Thursdays 17:45 – 19:30

**Dowdales School**, Dalton-In-Furness, LA15 8AH

* Mondays 16:30 - 18:30

**Ullswater Community College**, Wetheriggs Lane, Penrith, CA11 8NG

* Saturdays 09:15 – 12:30

No appointment is necessary – please just arrive at the testing site between the stated times.  Please wear a face covering unless you have a medical exemption. Please note, the testing sites will not be open outside these times.

We are working hard to make testing available at other sites across the County as soon as possible, and more sites will become available over the coming days and weeks. Please look out for further communications.

**Important information**

* At the moment, lateral flow testing at community testing sites is **only for Early Years colleagues** and a small number of other priority groups.  Testing for the general public is being arranged but will follow soon.  It would be appreciated please if you do not share this information with anyone outside of your organisation at this stage so that the number of tests available are able to be managed.
* Community Lateral Flow Testing is for **asymptomatic people only**.  If you have symptoms of coronavirus, please do not attend the test site, but instead book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.