

13th January 2021 – Trade Update – Covid-19 - Lateral Flow Tests

1. Lateral Flow Tests

It has been confirmed by Shropshire Councils Public Health Department that all hackney carriage and private hire drivers who live in the county of Shropshire are considered frontline workers and, therefore, are able to take advantage of the rapid COVID-19 test. This test, known as a lateral flow test, is one of the tools being used to help detect and fight COVID-19. The speedy tests can rapidly turn around results within an hour without the need for processing the swabs in a lab. The test, which has already been rolled out to select groups including university students, social care staff and care home visitors, is for people who do not have symptoms. There is no cost to hackney carriage/private hire drivers if they have a test.

Further information, including a link to book a test if you are a resident within the administrative area of Shropshire Council, can be found at

<https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2021/01/coronavirus-rapid-testing-being-offered-to-shropshires-frontline-workers/>

Information on how to book a test if you are resident in Telford & Wrekin Council area can be found at https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20741/i_have_covid-19_symptoms/5177/getting_a_covid-19_test_in_telford_and_wrekin

2. Coronavirus (COVID-19): taxis and PHVs:

The Department for Transport (DfT) has produced sector-specific guidance for the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) industry to help drivers and operators of taxis and private hire vehicles stay safe, prevent the spread of coronavirus, and ensure passengers are well informed. You can access the latest on GOV.UK by clicking [here](#).

3. Community Reassurance Update from Shropshire Council - January 2021

NHS vaccination programme

As we enter our third phase of lockdown with the news that Covid-19 cases are rising, it's great to see the NHS vaccination programme is underway in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin as part of the national rollout. Vaccination started in the county on 8th December at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

While supporting family, friends and neighbours during this lockdown, please share these important words from Angie Wallace, the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme Director for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin:

“We are working hard to ensure that that everyone who needs a vaccine is able to get one...we are now working through plans to deliver the vaccine by the middle of February to the four top priority groups. These include all residents in a care home for older adults and their carers, everyone over the age of 70, all frontline health and social care workers, and everyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

We expect vaccine supply to increase, particularly now further vaccines have been approved for use. This is good news and will help enable us to increase the number of people we can vaccinate over the coming weeks; however, it will take time to roll the

programme out across the county but be assured we are working hard to do this as quickly as is safely possible.

I would urge the public to come forward when they are called up for the vaccine and to make sure that they attend their appointments. Please do not contact your practice or the NHS for a vaccine; you will be contacted by the NHS when it is your turn.”

The public have an important part to play - please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, you will be contacted. When contacted, please attend your booked appointments; and please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives.

If you DO have COVID-19 symptoms:

If you have symptoms, book a test by calling 119 or online www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Rachel Robinson, Shropshire's Director of Public Health said:

“Unfortunately, like many areas across the country, Shropshire has seen a rapid rise in the number of positive cases.

Community testing has a big role to play in driving infection rates down but it only works as part of a whole suite of measures including effective contact tracing, following the guidance around socialising and self-isolation and the roll-out of the vaccine. Getting tested doesn't mean people can stop social distancing, wearing masks or washing their hands, but it does help to make the activities they are undertaking safer. By getting tested, even if you don't have symptoms, you are doing the right thing and ultimately helping people to stay well, businesses to stay open, children to stay in school and hospitals to have the capacity to treat other illness.”

Dean Carroll, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for adult social care, public health and climate change, said:

“Whilst the number of positive cases in Shropshire remain low compared to other parts of the West Midlands, we are still seeing an increase. I know and appreciate the efforts everyone is making to be responsible and to try and prevent the spread of the virus. But it is now more important than ever for us all to follow the national guidance to keep the rates down, and our loved ones safe.

These rapid tests will help our frontline workers to get tested and be sure that at that particular moment they are Covid-19 free. Those testing positive can take immediate action and self-isolate – reducing the impact on the wider community.”

Volunteer and ‘be part of history’

People are also being urged to ‘be part of history’ by applying for roles in the county's Covid-19 Vaccination Service. This will ensure there is a dedicated workforce to staff the hubs, vaccination centres and services across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. There are opportunities for current and retired healthcare professionals, but also for non-clinical staff in a range of administrative, reception and other front-of-house roles.

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Long Covid Support

A new service has been launched for patients with Long Covid in a joint project by Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust. It aims to provide help and support to local people suffering from Post Covid Syndrome, which is commonly known as Long Covid. Although most people recover from Covid, there are some who experience longer term effects including a range of conditions such as breathlessness, poor sleep, fatigue, and a cough as well as anxiety and a low mood. For more information on Long Covid go to: www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk

And finally, please help people to take care and avoid scams

Katherine Hart, lead office at the Chartered Trading Standards Institute said:

"I have been tracking and warning the public about Covid-related scams since the beginning of the pandemic, and at every stage of response, unscrupulous individuals have modified their campaigns to defraud the public. The vaccine brings great hope for an end to the pandemic and lockdowns, but some only wish to create even further misery by defrauding others. The NHS will never ask you for banking details, passwords, or PIN numbers and these should serve as instant red flags."

Here's a link to a BBC news item about scams. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55563748>

4. Contacting the Licensing Team:

Shropshire Council offices remain closed to the public. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to submit any queries, applications, additional paperwork and photographs etc. to the Licensing Team by email to taxis@shropshire.gov.uk, or you can contact the team by telephone on 0345 678 9046 and they will be happy to assist you.