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**Coronavirus rapid testing centre opens at University of Suffolk**

A new Covid-19 rapid testing centre for people without symptoms in Suffolk and which can take nearly 700 samples per day has begun operation.

The centre, based at the former Profiles gym at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich, provides lateral flow testing, with results delivered in under an hour.

The tests (LFTs) are most useful at identifying people who are infectious on the day of the test but not showing symptoms.

The centre has been opened by Suffolk County Council (SCC) in partnership with the University of Suffolk. Testing is for anyone working in the town who cannot work from home.

Also targeted are employers and organisations in Ipswich whose staff cannot work from home. They are being urged to block-book their workforce in for tests.

However people showing symptoms of Covid-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has, should not visit the centre – instead they should ring 119 or go to the NHS website to book a test at one of the 12 symptomatic testing sites in Suffolk.

The centre began operating on January 4 testing teachers, university students, school pupils and support staff.

The test involves taking a swab from the throat and nose to see whether coronavirus is present in the body.

The person tested will then receive a text message giving the result within an hour.

Anyone giving a positive test will be told to self-isolate and advised on what to do next, including the need for further testing.

Anyone giving a negative result is invited back to carry out a further test after a few days.

This is in case levels of the virus in a person at the earlier test were too low to be detected at that time.

The testing is being run by contractors Commisceo on behalf of SCC through government funding.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, chair of the Local Outbreak Board said: “The test is another important tool in tackling the virus whilst the vaccine is being rolled out as it can help prevent the spread from people who are infected but do not have symptoms.

“This is important as up to 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus never show any symptoms but may still be infectious.”

Rachel Kearton, chair of the Suffolk Coordination Group, said: “As part of our response to the increasing cases in Suffolk we will be rolling out further rapid testing centres across Suffolk in the future to identify further individuals who are infectious but not symptomatic.

“Together with key messages such as Hand Face and Space, rapid tests for people without symptoms are a vital tool in helping us combat the spread of the virus.”

The unit will run initially for the next two months and can carry out up to 690 tests a day.

Testing will be seven days a week between 7am and 7pm. Appointments can be made through the booking website [https://commisceo-pcs.shiftpartner.com/](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__commisceo-2Dpcs.shiftpartner.com_&d=DwQFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=ZTVCEZZMOP7TjeyxkDuk-dNf9jJWQ4aIPnc1sR0kA0w&m=Nei4a-uir8EVGNF4YHxA8zE3f_vj-YHhQhbaqG1K0B4&s=mStTJM2fL1OkqqKOCU6uFjNIDdxyKzuRBlBnrCzC4yo&e=) or calling 0333 772 6144.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

**Suffolk Resilience Forum**

The information above has been issued on behalf of the Suffolk Resilience Forum. The forum is comprised of the Suffolk’s NHS, Emergency and Public Services, working together to keep the county safe.

For more information about the Suffolk Resilience Forum, visit [www.suffolkresilience.com](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.suffolkresilience.com&d=DwQFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=ZTVCEZZMOP7TjeyxkDuk-dNf9jJWQ4aIPnc1sR0kA0w&m=Nei4a-uir8EVGNF4YHxA8zE3f_vj-YHhQhbaqG1K0B4&s=0cia-1pclYV35Xn9vpll1maq0NoghvyNn3gqWc8tubw&e=)