

Friday 11 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID19 COMMUNITY TESTING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

You will be aware of the increasing rate of COVID19 across much of Southend-on-Sea, Essex and Thurrock, particularly in young people and young adults. In order to help stop the spread, the Government has made additional testing capacity available for all children/young people and their families to enable you to get a test even if you do not have symptoms of COVID19.

This is particularly important now as Christmas approaches and families look forward to meeting and spending time together. I am therefore urging you to please have your child and family tested for coronavirus.

To help achieve this, in partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care, we are increasing the capacity and number of mobile testing centres local to you, as below:

- Hamlet Court Road car park. A new walk-through mobile testing unit site will be open from tomorrow (Saturday 12 December), **seven days a week (9am to 3pm)**. There is no need to book for this site, you can turn up and say that your local authority has asked you to get a test
- Southend Airport, Long Stay Car Park 3, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6YE – this mobile testing unit is now open **seven days per week**. Please book through the national system (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>)
- Shoebury Park, Elm Rd, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 9SF – this mobile testing unit will now be open **five days a week** (Monday to Friday). Please book through the national system (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>)
- Short Street local testing site remains open **seven days a week**. This is available for both walk-through and appointments booked through the national system (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>)

The national system also allows you to order tests by post if you cannot drive or walk to one of the drive-through testing centres. Please select “Yes” to the question “*Is the person who needs a test part of a trial of government pilot project*” on the website. Please do not get a test if you have had a positive test in the last 12 weeks as it may give an incorrect positive result.

If you have been asked to self-isolate for 10 or 14 days by the NHS Test and Trace Programme, your school or the council’s Public Health Team because you have been in contact with someone else who has tested positive for COVID19, you can still get tested but you should complete your period of self-isolation even if you test negative. This is because the test may not detect COVID19 in some people who are incubating the virus.

I would also ask that you take your child for a second test in the New Year around 3-4 days before return to school so we can ensure that no-one is infectious and can start an outbreak.

Thank you for your support in helping us to prevent the spread of COVID19 during these difficult times.

With best wishes,

Krishna Ramkhelawon
Director of Public Health