

## Covid-19 Test Kits – Priority Post Box Collections

June 2020

Audience: All operational managers to brief staff (maintaining social distancing)

Manager's Brief

### Briefing messages for staff

- Today's briefing provides a further update to previous communications that have been released over the last few months regarding the antigen home testing kits.
- Through their NHS portal, the government has now made test kits available to all members of the public. They allow customers to safely self-test at home and return their sample to labs to check if they are currently infectious or not.
- Royal Mail is supporting this important national effort against the coronavirus in three key ways –
  1. Royal Mail Relay continues to collect samples from numerous drive-through test centres across the UK to designated testing labs
  2. A UK-wide, 7 days a week, home collection service, where samples are collected from homes and returned to testing labs via the Royal Mail network and using our Tracked Returns service.
  3. Members of the public are able to post their samples in one of the priority postboxes. [This briefing provides you with some key updates regarding this strand.](#)
- In line with government efforts to continue ramping up numbers of tests being performed daily, they are shifting their main focus to the use of our priority post boxes and, to support with this, the number of these boxes has been increased from 13,000 to over 30,000. This service will be available Monday to Saturday.
- Instructions that arrive with test kits will advise how to use our 'Find nearest service' tool on our website to locate where their nearest priority post box is.
- To reduce instances of samples being posted back through non-priority post boxes, a new sticker label has been produced which needs to be placed on all priority post boxes. This should make them easily identifiable to members of the public.
- Because there are often restrictions in place by local councils around what is allowed vs what is not, our Legal team has provided us with specific advice on where the stickers must be affixed, dependent on the type of post box.
- We're going to need your help with applying these stickers so once they are received and once we understand which of our post boxes will be on the priority list, we will come and speak to those who have any of their route.
- It is possible that members of the public may mistakenly post their test kits back through regular post boxes too so all collections colleagues need to be prepared to identify and safely handle them if they spot any.
- The samples have a forty-eight-hour life span, so it is critical that all collections are completed daily and items are moved through our network at pace.
- Everyone needs to check the returns labels carefully and ensure the samples are forwarded on to the correct lab
- Previous advice stands on the use of PPE when collecting from post boxes, identifying the items and handling them safely using the self-seal bagging process.
- All staff collecting from post boxes will be provided with a good supply of clear polythene self-seal bags, green mail bags to collect the test kits into, as well as hand sanitiser and gloves (should they wish to wear them).

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### Next Steps

1. Please re-brief all staff in your unit, including any part timers, those currently on annual leave, sick leave, part time workers, reserves and any volunteers. Remember to maintain social distancing, so this may need to be done on a one to one basis.
2. You can find all relevant materials for your part of the pipeline, including safety documentation, on the intranet page.
3. Please ask your Workplace Coaches to support you with these briefings, as well as run demonstrations around the safe handling/bagging of these items.
4. Please ensure all collections staff have a good supply of the clear polythene self-seal bags when they go out on duty, green mail bags to collect the items into, as well as hand sanitiser and gloves (should they wish to wear them)
5. You also need to keep some polythene bags available on the shop floor or work area in all operational areas, in case any of these test kits fall out of process, are unbagged and your staff need to handle them
6. Keep a close eye on the number of these bags and ensure you order more well in advance before you run out.
7. To order more self-seal polythene bags – complete the requisition form on the [Sharepoint](#) and email it to [uniform@royalmail.com](mailto:uniform@royalmail.com). In the subject heading, mark it as COVID19 and your request will be processed asap.
8. Because the test samples will be posted in priority post boxes, there are some key actions all collections and COLODs need to be aware of and put in place as soon as possible:
  - a. All priority boxes must be collected from in line with final plate times
  - b. All collections from the priority boxes need to meet the final despatch every night
  - c. Contingencies need to be in place to meet resource failures / miss of last dispatch
9. Please engage your unit reps and local ASRs/unit safety reps to support our people deliver an excellent service. We understand that some colleagues will have concerns about handling the Covid-19 returns test kits. Please ensure where possible that you involve your unit reps and unit safety reps a) to explain the importance of the service we are providing and b) draw particular attention to the safety steps in the process to reassure colleagues that may be concerned. If you are unable to resolve any concerns, please raise with your SDL who will work with the Area / Div CWU Reps for further support and assurance.

It is in all our interests to ensure that these high priority tests are collected and returned to the laboratories as quickly as possible in order to save lives. Please do everything you can to ensure that the processes above take place and we all do our part to help our country during this difficult and unprecedented time. Thank you all for your continued efforts and fantastic work day to day, delivering for our country.