

New rapid site opens in Bilston as testing numbers hit 47,000

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Wolverhampton's latest rapid test site for people without symptoms of Covid-19 has opened, as it is revealed that around 47,000 such rapid tests have been carried out in the city so far.

The new facility, the sixth rapid test site in the city, is open at Bilston Community Centre, Prouds Lane, on Thursdays, Fridays and Mondays from 8am-4pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 10am-4pm. No appointment is necessary, though people attending for a test must be symptom free and must not have been told to self-isolate.

Councillor Jasbir Jaspal, the City of Wolverhampton Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing, said: "I am delighted that we've now opened our sixth rapid test site for people without symptoms of Covid-19.

"We know that as many as one in three people who have coronavirus don't show any symptoms, but that does not mean they are not infectious.

"The fact we now have six rapid test sites open to the public, together with rapid testing which has been established in a number of workplaces, is really helping to break the chain of transmission by enabling us to find hundreds of cases of the virus which we would not otherwise have known about."

Latest figures show that, since rapid testing was first piloted in Wolverhampton in November, around 47,000 tests have been completed. Just over 1,900 positive test results have been returned and those individuals have self-isolated, preventing the spread of the virus to others.

Councillor Jaspal added: "By finding these 1,900 cases, those who were infected but didn't know it have been able to self-isolate and have helped break the chain of transmission at an early stage. That's why rapid testing is so important, and that's why we're encouraging people without symptoms to get a test to see whether they are carrying the virus or not."

Rapid testing is now available, without an appointment, at:

- The Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Monday-Friday, 8am-7pm and Saturday and Sunday, 10am-6pm
- The Jamia Masjid Bilal, Newhampton Road West, 10am-6.30pm daily
- Pendeford Library, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 10am-6pm
- The Hub at Ashmore Park, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10am-6pm
- St Joseph's Church, Willenhall Road (Monday-Friday, 2pm-6pm).
- Bilston Community Centre, Prouds Lane, Thursday, Friday and Monday, 8am-4pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 10am-4pm.

In addition, testing for people working in education and early years settings is available at Pendeford Library from 7am-10am and 4pm-6pm, Monday to Friday; staff are asked to bring their work ID or a pay slip to confirm eligibility.

Please note, rapid testing is not available to people who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, or to anyone with symptoms of Covid-19, which include a fever, a new continuous cough or a change to the sense of taste or smell. They should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test by visiting www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or calling 119.

For full details of all the rapid and PCR testing facilities in Wolverhampton, please visit www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing.

Latest figures show there were 374.5 cases of Covid-19 per 100,000 people in Wolverhampton over the seven days to 1 February. That means 985 people in the city tested positive for the virus in that seven day period – though the true number of new cases will likely be considerably higher.

The latest information and guidance around coronavirus is available at www.gov.uk/coronavirus and on the council's own coronavirus pages at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus. Further details of the lockdown restrictions currently in place, and the answers to frequently asked questions, are available at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/covidalert.

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Notes to editors:

1/ For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Paul Brown, Communications Manager, on 01902 555497 or email paul.brown@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

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