



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

Sir Robert Neill MP

Chair of the Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: 84986

28 January 2021

Dear Bob,

RAPID TESTING PILOT AT MANCHESTER CIVIL JUSTICE CENTRE

I am writing to let you know that from tomorrow, HM Courts and Tribunals Service's (HMCTS) will be piloting the rapid testing of court users for COVID-19 at Manchester Civil Justice Centre. The trial is part of the national testing programme and will run for four weeks. Results of the trial will help the Department of Health and Social Care determine how rapid testing can be used in different public sector settings, and how it could be rolled out nationally across other courts and tribunals.

As you will know, we take the safety of our courts and tribunal spaces very seriously. The buildings follow all public health and Government COVID-secure guidelines, and measures are in place to keep all court and tribunal users safe. While our buildings are already COVID-secure, this additional measure will provide further reassurance to those visiting our buildings.

The tests are voluntary and will be carried out through lateral flow devices, which detect the presence or absence of coronavirus by applying a swab or saliva sample to the device's absorbent pad. The sample runs along the surface of the pad, showing at the end a visual positive or negative result dependent on the presence of the virus.

For this pilot, the tests will only be available to those who have a case in court on the day of the test and those not showing any symptoms. As this will not be a public test centre and we do not anticipate any increase in footfall. Anyone showing symptoms will be asked to follow existing guidance not to attend court and inform the senior person on site.

Judiciary, staff in public facing roles, touchpoint cleaners and security will be offered a test twice per week. This is because these roles have the highest risk of causing significant operational disruption in cases where the individual tests positive for Covid-19.

I trust this is a helpful update. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours ever

RT HON ROBERT BUCKLAND QC MP