**Testing pilot expands for people without symptoms of COVID-19 in Cheshire West and Chester**

A second centre opens in Cheshire West and Chester today, Monday, 18 January, to offer COVID-19 tests to targeted groups of residents who do not have symptoms of the virus.

Cheshire West and Chester Council is launching its new site at Winsford Lifestyle Centre to provide rapid and weekly testing to key groups, including people who cannot work from home, with results available in around half an hour.

This is in addition to a testing centre that opened at Stanney Oaks Leisure Centre, in Ellesmere Port, on 16 December offering testing to unpaid carers.

Testing will now be available at both sites to residents who are unable to work from home and to unpaid carers.

The pilot aims to identify people who have COVID-19 without symptoms and so stop people from spreading the disease unknowingly.

Since it opened on 16 December, the testing centre at Stanney Oaks Leisure Centre has tested more than 4,500 people and has found around 160 positive cases.

Cllr Louise Gittins, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council, said: “I’m really pleased with the success we have seen at the Council’s first testing centre.

“It’s great to see so many people taking up the offer of regular testing and playing their part to stop the spread of this virus.

“Government data shows that one in three people with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms so are spreading the disease without realising.

“Testing people without symptoms means we can identify cases that might not have been spotted and break chains of transmission that could have resulted in serious illness or loss of life.”

The Council’s testing centres are open for unpaid carers and people who cannot work from home between 9am and 7pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays. No appointment is necessary but there may be a queue.

Anyone taking a test will carry it out themselves – it is not painful and is quick to do.

Testing for people with symptoms of COVID-19 remains in place for everyone across the borough.

Anyone who develops symptoms, which include a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss or change in your sense of taste or smell, should self-isolate immediately and call: 119 or visit: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fnhs.uk%2Fcoronavirus&data=04%7C01%7C%7Ccb6d94c54b794483a84e08d8bc5b7051%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637466448198610371%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=4aBUIjxlYcVWljlkLjw%2FxfMQ33v0StzD4o5%2B8NKzPb0%3D&reserved=0) to book a test.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 everyone is reminded to stay at home as much as possible, wash their hands or use hand sanitiser regularly, cover their face in enclosed spaces and maintain social distancing by keeping two metres away from people they do not live with.

For more information on COVID-19 tests visit: [cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fcheshirewestandchester.gov.uk%2Fcoronavirus&data=04%7C01%7C%7Ccb6d94c54b794483a84e08d8bc5b7051%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637466448198620370%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=jnTPDoW5%2Fd4okMoEqON5YBtNnHV774gcepIsTCp7AZg%3D&reserved=0) and click on COVID-19 testing.