     NEWS

**2nd February 2021**

**Rapid lateral flow testing now available at Worcester Cathedral**

**Worcester Cathedral** is opening its door to residents who want to get a free rapid Covid-19 test in Worcestershire.

Rapid lateral flow testing, in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care, will be available to residents who don’t have any symptoms, at **Worcester Cathedral between 10am and 5.45pm, Monday to Saturday**. The aim is to help drive down transmission rates.

Testing will be available for people with no symptoms aged 18 and over, **at The Cathedral from Wednesday 3rd February**.

Appointments must be pre-booked using this online booking link <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/LateralFlowTesting>

Around one in three people who are infected with Covid-19 have no symptoms so could be spreading the disease without knowing it. Broadening testing to identify people without symptoms, means finding positive cases more quickly, and breaking the chains of transmission.

Rapid-turnaround lateral flow tests are a new type of technology, which provide results within an hour. Lateral flow devices do not require a laboratory to process the test.

**Dr Kathryn Cobain, Director for Public Health in Worcestershire said:** “The Cathedral is such an iconic building, I am delighted it is going to be used as a Rapid Flow Testing centre. This will add to our efforts to reduce the spread of the virus and will mean even more choice of venues for those wanting to get a rapid test in the city.”

**Councillor John Smith, cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing added**: “I couldn’t think of a more appropriate building to join us in tackling Coronavirus. The Cathedral has been a central part of the community for over fourteen centuries, and it is great to see it taking a role, as part of the response to the pandemic.”

**The Dean of Worcester, Peter Atkinson said:** “After taking the difficult decision to suspend public worship at Worcester Cathedral to help contain the spread of Covid-19, I am proud that we are now able to further support the City’s efforts to drive down transmission rates by offering the Cathedral for the community testing initiative. Thanks to the support of Worcestershire County Council, we have been able to do this while also continuing to open for socially-distanced private prayer from 11am to 1pm, Monday to Saturday. We continue to pray for the community daily by means of our online services and this is a proactive way of putting our prayers into action.”

**ENDS**

For press enquiries or to arrange an interview with a spokesperson please contact the Council's Communications team on 01905 766646.

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**Notes to editors**

Additional quote from **Worcester Cathedral’s Chief Operating Officer, Val Floy**

“Worcester Cathedral has been serving the community for fourteen centuries, and we are delighted to offer our building to support the local community testing initiative at the start of 2021. We have worked closely with Worcestershire County Council and DHSC to provide all they need to operate the initiative under strict social-distancing and public health regulations, as well as ensuring that members of the public can continue socially-distanced private prayer in a separate part of the building.”

All efforts to find people without symptoms work hand in hand with the existing free testing service for **those with symptoms**.

Anyone with one or more of these symptoms – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – should book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.

There are over six PCR test centres across the area which are open seven days a week, including:

* University of Worcester Car Park, Chequers Lane, Worcester, WR2 5JN
* Redditch Trescott Road Council Car Park, Trescott Road, Redditch B98 7AH
* Pershore Civic Centre Car Park Queen Elizabeth Drive Pershore WR10 1EW
* Bromsgrove - Stourbridge Road Car Park 8 Stourbridge Road Bromsgrove B61 0AB
* Kidderminster Harriers Stadium Close Car Park
* Malvern Victoria / Como Road Car Park Malvern WR14 2TH