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New COVID-19 testing centre launches at the Royal Welsh Showground

Hundreds of people in Powys with COVID-19 symptoms can now be tested each day thanks to a new partnership between Powys Teaching Health Board, UK Armed Forces, Powys County Council, and the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society.

Anyone with symptoms - new continuous cough, fever, or less of sense of taste or smell - can request a home testing kit via the Welsh Government website or by ringing 119 or 18001 119 for people with hearing or speech difficulties.

Alongside this, anyone with symptoms can book an appointment at drive-in testing units in the county. These are currently located at Bronllys Hospital, Theatr Hafren in Newtown and from later this week at a new location at the Royal Welsh Showground.

Stuart Bourne, Director of Public Health for Powys Teaching Health Board, said:

“Our drive-in testing units offer a safe and local way for people with symptoms to get rapid access to a COVID-19 antigen test in the county.

“The units provide a quick and simple swab. People being tested do not even need to leave their car.

“This ensures the safest experience for everyone involved – the people attending for testing, the staff at the unit, and the local community.”

The new drive-in testing unit for Mid Powys is located at the Royal Welsh Showground.

Steve Hughson, Chief Executive of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, said:

“We are delighted to be hosting a drive-in testing unit at the Royal Welsh Showground and will continue to work with partners to support our local communities in tackling this pandemic.

“COVID-19 is likely to be with us all for many months to come. With our large showground site we are able to provide a great facility for COVID-19 testing, whilst

also continuing our careful planning for the safe resumption of other activities on the Showground site.

“We are proud to be playing our part in helping people to get a test, stop the spread and keep Powys safe.”

The drive-in testing units are available by appointment only.

When fully operational the units will normally accommodate around 10 to 15 tests per hour.

Cllr James Evans, Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing and Regulatory Services for Powys Council said:

“These are not drop-in facilities. Please do not arrive without an appointment as you will not be tested.

“Booking your appointment means that the testing units have your full details when you arrive for your test. It also ensures that there is no disruption for nearby communities.

“Please do follow the guidance on self-isolation when you attend for a test. You should travel direct to the test centre and return straight home. If you need help with self-isolation then please talk to family, friends and neighbours or contact one of the many community groups across Powys who have provided such amazing support during COVID-19.”

“Here in Powys we have been one of the first pilot areas in Wales to prepare for the introduction of contact tracing. Expanded test facilities means that we can refer people quickly for a test, helping us to stop the spread of COVID-19.”

The COVID-19 testing programme in Wales currently offers the antigen test, which identifies whether someone currently has the virus. Welsh Government is also working on plans to introduce antibody testing, which will let people know if they have previously had the virus.

Antigen testing is available in several different ways:

- Members of the public and critical workers can request a home testing kit. This is available online at <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>, by ringing 119, or by ringing 18001 119 if you have speech or hearing difficulties. Through this link, Powys residents can also book at mass drive-through testing centres in neighbouring counties, which can offer a handy alternative for people living on the county’s borders.
- Members of the public and critical workers can request an appointment at a drive-in testing unit – in Powys this can currently be booked by emailing powysresourcing@wales.nhs.uk or calling 01874 712600, or by visiting the Health Board website at www.powysthb.wales.nhs.uk/coronavirus-testing
- Hospital inpatients and care home residents are tested in their hospital or care home

The current drive-in testing sites in Powys are:

- Bronllys Hospital
- Theatr Hafren in Newtown
- Royal Welsh Showground (opening week beginning 1 June 2020)

The three sites will be staffed by teams from Powys Teaching Health Board, and from the UK Armed Forces mobile units deployed in Powys. The mobile units will also continue to visit locations across the county, including to support local testing in care homes.

Mr Bourne added:

“We will keep our testing programme under review, including to take account of the introduction of antibody testing when available. Our current programme of home testing and drive-in testing – along with our testing programme for hospital inpatients and care homes – has enough capacity to test everyone who needs a test, and to help us reach out to people right across the county.”

“Our testing units have operated from a wide range of locations across the county and I would like to thank all the venues and everyone involved in this true collaborative effort to Keep Powys Safe.”

Notes:

- Library photos of testing units in operation are available on request from Powys Teaching Health Board by contacting powys.engagement@wales.nhs.uk
- More information about coronavirus testing in Powys is available from www.powysthb.wales.nhs.uk/coronavirus-testing

Get a Test

Information about Coronavirus Testing in Powys
www.powysthb.wales.nhs.uk/coronavirus-testing

