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Community Testing Programme's Mobile Covid Clinics continue rapid COVID-19 testing across Highlands

Issued in partnership with NHS Highland

Since the launch of the Community Testing Programme in April, the Highland Council's Mobile Covid Clinics have provided a pop-up venue for rapid COVID-19 testing at 12 different locations across the Highland region. Originally consisting of two customised vehicles - the articulated lorry Jabbernaut and smaller, rigid-body truck Testalot – the fleet was joined by another articulated lorry in June, Moves Like Jagger. All three vehicles contain cubicles for administering tests or vaccines, with a separate area for staff to process test results.

The Mobile Covid Clinics also double as vaccination clinics, and each week the Programme is able to deploy the units to best serve the communities at that time. Through close collaboration, The Highland Council and NHS Highland have been able to provide further testing and vaccination facilities across the Highlands using the Mobile Covid Clinics, wherever they are needed.

With cases on the rise, the need for regular testing in our communities has become more important. It is now recommended that everyone test themselves twice a week with a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test in order to stop the spread of the virus. With a third vehicle now able to be deployed, the Community Testing Programme's increased capacity will be put to use in providing communities more opportunity to get their tests, with staff and volunteers on-site to show how it's done.

The presence of one of the testing fleet in a community should not be seen as evidence of an outbreak. When a unit is in a community to provide testing, it will be publicised as much as possible, and everyone without symptoms is welcome to drop in, get tested, and take some more tests home. When a Mobile Covid Clinic is being used for vaccinations, its presence will not be publicised, as

attendance is by appointment only. In either case, the sight of one of our mobile units in your town should give reassurance rather than concern.

Councillor Allan Henderson, chair of the Highland Council's Communities and Place committee, said, "The Community Testing Programme has been sending its Mobile Covid Clinics across the Highlands, delivering rapid COVID-19 testing for people without symptoms. As it continues this service, I would recommend everyone take the opportunity to get tested when a unit arrives in your area. Not everyone who gets COVID-19 knows they have it, and can be passing it on without realising, so by taking a test regularly, we can all make sure we're doing our bit to stop the spread. The friendly staff at these units will take you through the whole process, so you can leave reassured that you're helping your community stay safe."

The registration and testing process at a Mobile Covid Clinic takes just ten minutes, and there's no need to wait around for your result, as this is sent to you by text or email, usually within an hour. The units also provide a free LFD Collect service, which means you can also take home a free pack of seven more test kits.

By taking a rapid LFD test twice a week, we can all help our community, families and friends stay safe and slow down the spread of coronavirus.

If you have been vaccinated, you should still consider getting tested. While vaccines reduce the risk of infection after 14-21 days, people who have been vaccinated could still become infected. No vaccine provides 100% protection against a virus.

Free LFD tests for people without COVID-19 symptoms, are also available to collect from pharmacies in packs of seven, and can be sent to your home by visiting nhsinform.scot/testing, or by calling 119.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you should self-isolate immediately and seek a PCR test. Symptoms include new continuous cough, fever, or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

Similarly, you should not attend asymptomatic testing sites if you are currently self-isolating because you have been identified as a close contact, or if you have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.

PCR tests for people with COVID-19 symptoms can also be arranged by visiting nhsinform.scot/testing or by calling 119.

Images are available at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/highlandcouncil/albums/72157718478970873>

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