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Beware Fake COVID-19 Tests Warn Trading Standards

Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards is warning consumers to beware of scammers offering bogus COVID-19 tests and fake 'COVID free' certificates.

Warwickshire Trading Standards is currently investigating a case in which a consumer may have unwittingly paid over £100 to fraudsters for a 'quick-turn-around' COVID-19 test and received a fake 'all-clear' certificate in return.

The genuine laboratory named on the certificate has confirmed that it was previously unaware of the 'testing firm', did not carry out the test or issue any certificate.

The 'quick-turn-around' tests were being advertised on social media, targeted at individuals who do not have symptoms, but require proof of a negative test result, for example before embarking on a flight or for work purposes. Consumers requiring private tests normally have to pay for them, at a cost of around £150.

Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said:

"I would urge anyone seeking a private test to look for legitimate companies. Visit the Government's list of private providers and follow their guidance."

Help to find a legitimate private provider

The Government maintains updated lists of private providers of coronavirus testing. These providers have declared that they meet the government's minimum standards. The lists are continually updated by the Department of Health and Social Care and are reviewed by UKAS, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-private-providers-of-coronavirus-testing/list-of-private-providers-of-coronavirus-testing>

Newly established lateral flow test sites

Asymptomatic individuals are encouraged to access one of Warwickshire's newly established lateral flow test sites, for free, running in Water Orton, Nuneaton and Bedworth and Warwick District. Those using the site will be tested using fast-turnaround lateral flow test kits supplied by NHS Test and Trace in a bid to identify undiagnosed cases and stop people 'unwittingly spreading the virus'. Talking about the test facility for the Warwick District, **Director of Public Health at Warwickshire County Council, Dr Shade Agboola said:** "This is the fourth site to open in Warwickshire to the local community and we have plans to roll out additional test centres in Rugby and Stratford early in the new year. To date over 1,600 tests have been carried out at our test sites and we have received some great feedback".

Please note, only people without Covid-19 symptoms should book a test at one of the lateral flow test sites. For more information visit: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/information-coronavirus/coronavirus-community-testing?documentId=1031&categoryId=20216>

Anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 – a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a change to their sense of taste or smell – must self-isolate and book a test via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119 as usual.

There is more COVID-19 help and support available from Warwickshire County Council here: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirusvulnerable> or phone 0800 408 1447.

To report a scam or fraud to Trading Standards and receive advice, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 or visit: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/consumeradvice>

For information on scams targeted at Warwickshire consumers and businesses and to sign up to our scam email alerts, visit: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/scams>

A web copy of this press release is available here: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/1623/beware-fake-covid-19-tests-warn-trading-standards>

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Best Wishes

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