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To: All Members

Dear Brother/Sister

Covid19 testing – more options available

Last week the Westminster government announced that all essential workers can now apply for a Covid-19 test to find out whether they have the virus.

This follows their announcement on 17 April that firefighters and their households would have access to Covid-19 testing (All members circular 2020HOC0259MW).

The new measures apply in England but arrangements in the devolved administrations may be different. The Westminster government says that firefighters can still apply for a test through our employers, as we have been able to do over the last week. Processes to arrange and access testing for FRS staff should in the first instance be put in place and managed by the employer. FBU Brigade Secretaries and Brigade Health & Safety Reps will need to raise this with management as a matter of urgency through the appropriate forums and guidance is being issued to them in relation to this.

In England it is now possible to self-refer, through an online process:

<https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>

There are also mobile testing facilities being set up, because there are less than 30 centres and many workers would have to drive for hours to get a test.

The FBU believes that testing of firefighters is vital. We have been pressing governments for more than a month to get testing for our members. The union therefore encourages members to seek a test if they need one, to protect themselves, their workmates and the public. This would be best achieved through a coordinated plan within each FRS (see above). In addition to this the FBU will continue to make the case for the frequent and asymptomatic testing of critical FRS staff.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

MW/sll