

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Matt Wrack
sharon.lester@fbu.org.uk

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Dear Matt

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 2020 regarding the coronavirus testing of public sector workers who are required to come into contact with the public whilst discharging their duties in particular firefighters.

The Scottish Government is clear that firefighters are key workers and essential to maintain safety in our communities.

We are expanding our testing capacity in Scotland, which will allow us to test more key workers. I agree that it clearly desirable to test firefighters to make sure they don't self-isolate unnecessarily. Initially, the priority for tests remained with our NHS front-line staff but discussions have taken place about the possibility of new forms of tests, rather than swab tests, including at a UK level on the availability of dipstick tests that would allow people to test themselves much more quickly to tell whether they had had the virus.

I am pleased to confirm that as of today, 6 March testing has been made available for SFRS keyworkers at a facility within Glasgow Airport. SFRS personnel meeting the criteria for testing have been identified and contacted to attending this facility for testing.

Testing firefighters is an important element in ensuring we have as many firefighters on the front-line as possible. The Covid-19 virus is impacting on SFRS but I'm pleased to note that so far appliances have remained on the run in line with business as usual.

I hope that the FBU will continue to be supportive of the various essential changes which might be required to ensure coverage is maintained in Scotland if the situation deteriorates and the number of firefighters impacted dramatically increases.



ASH DENHAM

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



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