

## Covid-19 Testing Methods Bulletin No 3 – 1 May 2020

Dear Colleague

Earlier this week we held a virtual webinar and discussion with NHS labs on the Testing Methods [platform](#). It was wonderful to have so many people join, over 300 attendees, including peers across the UK and internationally. It was also excellent to see those new to this effort join the conversation and consider how they take part.

We held thought provoking discussions on how we as national partners can support labs in using novel testing approaches. Attendees made valuable points to help us in shaping our platform, challenges and future events. In taking forward, we look forward to updating you and will be running another webinar session in the next fortnight.

We have highlighted two new solutions from the platform, to see below. Do continue to look into these, try these out and run validation. And if you are a first-time reader, we do also encourage you to look at the previous bulletins and the 13 solutions these cover on RNA extraction, transport media and dry swabs. These are online [here](#).

### Sue Hill

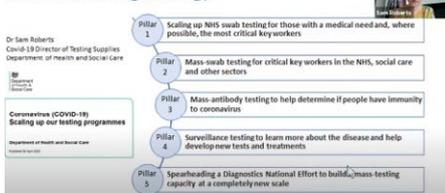
Chief Scientific Officer, NHS England  
On behalf of the moderators' group.

### Jo Martin

President, Royal College of Pathologists

## OVER THIS WEEK: Our first Testing Methods engagement session with NHS labs

### National Testing Strategy



The Pathology Alliance hosted an interactive webinar on novel solutions and current challenges faced by the NHS in testing at scale. We set out to cover:

- Outline the national testing strategy
- Share the Testing Methods platform and solutions
- Discuss challenges and support for testing at scale

**Recording available:** For those who unfortunately could not join, you can watch the webinar, including presentations and highlights from the discussions [here](#).

**Questions:** We are grateful for your thoughts, questions and ideas. See overleaf where we start to answer some of the frequent questions from this week's session.

**Next time:** We will confirm exact timings for the next engagement webinar shortly. This will run in the week commencing 11 May.

## NEW SOLUTION: Low volume blood collection and sample elution for serology testing



Serology testing largely depends on formal phlebotomy. In order to expand serology testing into the broader community, we need to be able to collect blood without the need for phlebotomy. We are looking for examples where small volume blood collection, coupled with elution where relevant, can be used for COVID-19 antibody testing for immediate or very rapid roll out.

1. [Using the same blood collection system as Thriva](#)

## NEW SOLUTION: Dry swabs for use in virus detection



A key element of speeding up the end to end testing process is the availability of swabs that can be used easily and reliably to detect the virus in a range of different swabbing applications and age groups including for use in home testing and which can be used with multiple extraction platforms.

2. [Using Guthrie Cards for DNA and RNA PCT tests](#)

## Q&A from the testing engagement webinar

In each bulletin we will work through key questions you have asked us at engagement events

**Q: How do I sign up to get the bulletin?**

A: The bulletin goes online every Friday afternoon on the RCPATH COVID-19 resources webpage [here](#). Our champions who work across the partner organisations will also cascade this.

**Q: When you were talking about the DHSC Testing Strategy, what is the role of the fifth testing pillar “to build a mass-testing capacity at a completely new scale”?**

A: The purpose of the fifth pillar is to create space for applying new approaches to both swabs and antibody testing and develop new industries to support testing efforts in future.

**Q: Are these methods going to get a particular accreditation e.g. ISO 15189, so we can use these in NHS labs?**

A: Where we share methods, they are considered ready to deploy and validate by our review team. Where approaches are already validated, we will look into how we share these resources.

**Q: I have thoughts on one of the solutions outlined at the webinar or want to learn more**

A: This is great to hear. If you have thoughts on a specific solution, you can reach the crowdsourcing page via links in the bulletin and join the discussion through the comments section.

**Q: Do the dry swabs have a break off point, we are worried about how to cut the swabs?**

A: Yes, the swabs should have a break point, allowing them to be snapped off safely into the containment tube being used. More detail is available in the dry swabs solutions we have shared.