**LATERAL FLOW TESTS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Why has this process been introduced at Sherwood Forest Hospitals (SFH)?**

NHS England published guidance on 14 December 2020 for ‘*Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic*.’ The document sets out actions which NHS Trusts should take to enable women to receive support from a partner, relative, friend or other person when receiving maternity care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document replaces the previous ‘*Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services’*, published on 8 September 2020.

One of these actions is to introduce where possible the option for women and their support person to access a lateral flow test swab. This will help the Trust to provide safe and personalised maternity care and increase the safety of women, hospital patients, staff and the wider community.

**Who is a support person?**

A support person may be the baby’s father or co-parent or anyone that the woman chooses to support her. Please note this cannot be a child.

**What is the lateral flow test?**

The Innova SARS-CoV2 Antigen Rapid Test (Lateral Flow test) uses a lateral flow device. This is a small cartridge that gives a visual indication of a positive/negative/invalid test. The test uses a swab which has been in contact with the nostril of the person being tested. The swab results are available after 30 minutes.

**Is the test mandatory / voluntary?**

The test is voluntary but women and their support person are offered the test to help keep the hospital safe for other women, their families and staff.

**What if I decline the test?**

 If you decline the test you will still be able to attend for your scan with all the appropriate infection prevention control measures in place i.e. wearing your mask, maintaining social distancing wherever possible.

**What if my support person declines the test?**

If your support person declines the test they will still be able to attend with you for your scan with all the appropriate infection prevention measures in place i.e. wearing your mask, maintaining social distancing wherever possible.

**What does the test involve?**

The test involves a swab that is taken from the nose (both nostrils). A member of the team will take the swab and then you will need to wait in the waiting area for 30 minutes for the result. For this reason you will be asked to attend 50 minutes prior to your appointment if you are planning to have a test.

**Is the test and its results recorded anywhere?**

Yes, every test whether positive or negative is recorded according to the hospital processes and the details are sent to Public Health England (PHE) as required by law.

**What happens if myself or my support partner have a positive test?**

If your support person tests positive they will not be able to accompany you to your scan and will be asked to leave the department and wait in the car/outside until you have completed your appointment. We do not provide a further test for support partners. They will be given information and guidance about self-isolation in line with the current government guidance. If you live with or have travelled in with your support person you will also need to self-isolate and will be treated as at risk. You will be treated therefore as if your test was positive.

If your test is positive the staff will arrange for you to have a further test (PCR test - see below) to confirm that you are positive. This test involves another swab, this time from your nose and throat. This will be performed before you leave the hospital and you will be informed of the results as soon as they are available (usually 24-48 hrs).

If either yourself or your partner tests positive an appropriate professional will make an assessment as to the most appropriate time for you to have your scan , which may depend on your current gestation. This may be at a different time on the same day or you may be asked to return on another date. This is so that appropriate infection prevention measures can be put in place to ensure the safety of other patients and staff. Staff will be able to answer any questions/concerns you may have at the time.

You will be given written information and guidance about self-isolation for you and your household in line with the current government guidance.

**What happens if myself or my support person have an invalid test?**

If you or your support person has an invalid test you will be able to go ahead with your scan to ensure smooth running of the scan department and will be offered to repeat the test after your scan appointment.