

Solution for Schools Set To Be Swamped by Mountain of COVID-19 Test Admin

Government advises secondary schools to test pupils weekly, but doesn't set out how as teachers and unions despair at late notice and lack of information.

BIRMINGHAM, UK, December 23, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- School leaders working throughout the Christmas period to prepare a COVID-19 testing system for their pupils have been advised to also start planning for the mountain of admin work they will face.



Children Being Covid Tested

Department for Education plans to delay the return of secondary school pupils in England by a week to test all pupils using rapid lateral flow tests have been described by Teaching Unions as 'inoperable' and 'undeliverable'.

While headteachers and Senior Leadership teams scramble to organise the logistics of administering the tests, the administration involved in tracking and monitoring results may have been put to one side.

“

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Mark Hales, Managing Director of SmrtLinks

Issues such as parental or carer consent, test scheduling and the tracking of tests, as well as the monitoring of positive results and stock levels of kits creates a huge workload for schools to consider on top of actually giving the tests.

One tech company has adapted its software system, already used in the social care sector to capture and report on COVID-19 testing results for individuals and teams, to work within schools.

Mark Hales, Managing Director of SmrtLinks, based in Birmingham, said: “We saw the

announcements being made by the Government on the last day of term, listened to the frustration of teachers and realised that we had a solution that could help.

“Since then we have heard what teaching unions have said and had conversations with school leaders and teachers.

“It is clear that there is a huge focus right now on getting a testing network set-up for the New Year, but little consideration for the vast amounts of associated administration.

“Communication and clarity of information will be absolutely key in ensuring that this hard work doesn’t go to waste once pupils are able to return - so far schools have had no guidance on how to monitor their testing system once it is ready to go.

“Our system will allow schools to plan, deliver, and monitor compliance by year group, class group or individual pupil or staff member and crucially, it doesn’t rely on a pupil having their own smartphone.”

Optimo Care Group, which has more than 700 social care staff working across the Northwest & Yorkshire, was an early adopter of the Smrtlinks system as they sought to keep on top of ever-growing staff COVID-19 testing data during the pandemic.

Richard Walker, Managing Director of Optimo Care Group, said: “The announcement regarding new COVID-19 testing requirements in schools from January clearly came as quite a shock to the whole sector and has thrown their carefully made plans for the New Year into disarray.

“As a care company, we have been evolving the ways we deal with the administration involved in tracking and monitoring high numbers of tests throughout the pandemic and we turned to tech to help.

“We believe that while schools focus on getting over the hurdle of actually finding people to carry out the tests and the logistics of administering them, the paperwork and tracking element will perhaps be the biggest challenge of all. It has the potential to be a logistical nightmare for them.

“If this system works as well in schools as it does for us, then I think it will be a big help.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

The SmrtLinks: Monitor system works utilising app technology, with designated senior staff informed of testing, compliance and results for pupils in real time.

The service is priced at 65p per pupil per week, based on weekly testing, with all crucial data remaining with the school, rather than the app owners.

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