

Minister for Health publishes Expert Report on COVID-19 Rapid Testing

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The Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD has published the Report of the COVID-19 Rapid Testing Group. The report recommends widespread pilots, or feasibility studies, of rapid tests across different sectors.

The report highlights that rapid testing is a fast-developing field. It recommends that various sectors and industries, including business, sports and education, should work in partnership with government departments to pilot and initiate widespread feasibility studies with a view to making rapid testing part of Ireland's collective and sustained response to COVID-19.

The Rapid Testing Group was chaired by Professor Mark Ferguson, Director General Science Foundation Ireland and Chief Scientific Adviser to the government. The report was shared with party leaders earlier this week and Professor Ferguson briefed party leaders on the Expert Group's findings and key recommendations.

Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, said:

"I would like to thank Professor Mark Ferguson for his enormous contribution. I would also like to thank all other members of the expert group who drafted the report, at what is an exceptionally busy time for the medical and scientific communities. Various international and national experts also contributed. This is a fast-developing and exciting field. New and improved rapid test systems are emerging all the time and I firmly support the introduction of rapid testing as an additional tool in our collective effort against COVID-19.

The report contains 20 recommendations. It said immediate focus should be placed on establishing an agile rapid test knowledge group, which would enable information on validated tests and sampling to be widely shared across government departments, agencies and sectors.

This was a majority report.