

Government expands expert team to rapidly roll out coronavirus test and trace programme

- The government has today appointed 2 new members to the team of experts working on the coronavirus test and trace programme
- Tom Riordan and Sarah-Jane Marsh will join the programme which is being chaired by Baroness Dido Harding
- The team will work to rapidly expand test and trace nationwide, backed by the successful scaling up of testing capacity across the country

The government has today announced the expansion of the expert team leading on the rapid nationwide roll out of the coronavirus test and trace programme.

The test and trace programme has been designed to minimise the spread of coronavirus, by identifying people who may have been in contact with the virus.

The programme is backed by increased testing capacity and a contact tracing app developed by NHSX, launched on the Isle of Wight earlier this month.

Today, further experts have been added to the team working on the programme's nationwide roll out for later this month.

Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council, will be leading on tracing alongside his existing role, and Sarah-Jane Marsh, Chief Executive of Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital, will be the lead on testing.

The experts will join the test and trace programme chair and Head of NHS Improvement, Baroness Dido Harding.

Both experts have been confirmed by Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock to further draw upon the best British expertise from across the country in the fight against the spread of coronavirus.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I am delighted to welcome Tom Riordan and Sarah-Jane Marsh to our team of experts working to rapidly expand the test and trace programme across the country.

As we respond to an evolving pandemic, their expert leadership will support us to follow each case of the virus within the UK, curbing its spread and saving lives.

Chair of the Test and Trace Programme Baroness Harding said:

Test and trace is a vital element in the next phase of the government's plan to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Expanding the test and trace team to bring in more experts will ensure we can use the very best of our tech, research and people power to help keep coronavirus at bay across the country.

I am very grateful to Leeds City Council and Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital for their support as Tom Riordan and Sarah-Jane Marsh join the national effort to stop the spread of the virus.

The test and trace team will work closely with National Testing Co-ordinator Professor John Newton. Professor Newton will continue to provide clinical guidance and will support the science of the programme alongside the deputy chief medical officers. His role has been expanded to allow him to ensure coordination between the testing and test and trace programmes, supporting Baroness Harding.