

UK Government local coronavirus testing site opens in Edinburgh

A new walk-through coronavirus testing centre has opened in Edinburgh. The new facility is being provided by the UK Government as part of a UK-wide drive to continue to improve the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities.

The centre, in the Usher Hall, will offer pre-booked tests for those with coronavirus symptoms.

The new site is situated so as to be easily accessible without a car. Those being tested will be required to follow public health measures, including social distancing, not travelling by taxi or public transport, practising good personal hygiene and wearing a face covering throughout, including while travelling to and from the testing centre.

Anyone attending an appointment at a walk-through testing will be provided with guidance on getting to and from the test site safely, with additional support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities.

Testing at the new site will start today [Friday 25 September], from 2pm, with appointments made available every day.

The latest UK Government site is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history, which now comprises 75 drive-through sites, 112 walk-through sites, 258 mobile units, home testing and satellite kits and network of Lighthouse laboratories.

Testing is available only for those with coronavirus symptoms – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. Anyone with one or more of these symptoms should book a test at [NHS Inform](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816. From the start of the pandemic, testing has been prioritised for the most vulnerable, including patients in clinical settings and care home residents, vital health and care staff and to manage outbreaks.

Anyone testing positive for the will be contacted by contact tracers to help them trace their contacts. This will help people to identify who they may have been in close contact with, protecting others from further transmission.

Close contacts of those testing positive will also hear from contact tracers, asking them to stay at home for 14 days to prevent them from unknowingly spreading the virus. They will be advised to also book at test if they develop symptoms.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

We continue to expand testing to make sure that everyone with

symptoms can get a test, with our new walk-in sites making it even easier no matter where you live.

This new site forms part of our national testing network, which has the capacity to test more than a million people a week and is growing all the time.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted to protect others around you and stop the spread of the virus.

This is a national effort and we are proud to be working with a number of partners to turn this ambition into a reality and roll out additional capacity to where it is needed.

Baroness Dido Harding, Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, said:

Our new walk through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand testing across the UK to deliver 500,000 tests a day by the end of October.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste.

Everybody should continue to think hands, face, space, and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted – this is the only way we can return to a more normal way of life.

UK Government minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said:

The UK Government is committed to helping all parts of the UK fight coronavirus. We are providing the bulk of covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre in Edinburgh comes on top of nine other testing sites across Scotland funded by the UK Government, as well as the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab.

Testing will play a vital part over the coming months, helping to manage local outbreaks and protect livelihoods. This walk-through centre will help people in Edinburgh have easy access to a test in the city centre.

We are pleased to be working with commercial partners and with Edinburgh's iconic Usher Hall. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people and I would like to thank everyone involved for their incredible efforts.

The testing centre is being operated in partnership with Mitie and will self-administered tests.

Simon Venn, Chief Government & Strategy Officer, Mitie, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Edinburgh, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.