

Edinburgh Airport COVID-19 testing centre opens to Key Workers

A drive-through coronavirus testing facility has opened at Edinburgh Airport as part of the Government's UK-wide drive to increase testing for thousands more NHS and other key workers.

The Edinburgh Airport site sits alongside a rapidly expanding network of testing sites being set up around the UK, and is operating on an appointment-only basis for NHS staff and other key workers. The facility will be piloted for its first few days of operation.

This follows the launch of the Government's partnership with universities, research institutes and companies to begin rollout of the network of new 'lighthouse' labs and field testing sites across the UK, with 27 testing sites opened to date.

This network will provide thousands more PCR swab tests – which are used to identify if you currently have the virus – for critical key workers, starting with NHS front line staff. This means those who test negative for coronavirus can return to work as soon as possible, and those who test positive are able to recover.

The Edinburgh Airport testing centre is being operated in partnership with Sodexo, with Boots medical staff administering some tests and others being self-administered. Those tested will receive their results within 48 hours.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

“The UK Government is rapidly scaling up the national effort to boost testing capacity for coronavirus to protect the vulnerable, support our NHS, and ultimately save lives.

“This new service will help end the uncertainty of whether NHS and social care staff need to stay at home meaning those who test negative will be able to return to work.

“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.”

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

“This new testing centre at Edinburgh Airport, which is funded by the UK Government, will help key workers continue to do their lifesaving work and look after those who need it most.

“The UK Government has committed to expand our testing capacity right across the UK and this new centre is now one of three in Scotland. We will continue to work for everyone in the UK to save lives and protect our NHS.”

Professor John Newton, National Coordinator for the UK Coronavirus Testing Strategy, said:

“New testing sites such as this one are a key pillar of our 5-pillar plan to scale up testing, and are critical in supporting NHS staff who are isolating at home to return safely to work if the test is negative.”

“This is a brilliant example of industries and businesses turning their resources to creating and rolling out mass testing at scale, which will help to deliver on our aim of carrying out 100,000 tests a day across the UK by the end of the month.”

A Boots UK Spokesperson said:

“We feel incredibly proud to be supporting COVID-19 testing for critical workers in Edinburgh.”

“Boots has been at the heart of UK healthcare for 171 years and has always come forward to support the community in times of need. Our team in Edinburgh is no exception. Some of our colleagues have already stepped forward to volunteer to run this COVID-19 testing station, which will start testing its first critical workers today.”

Sean Haley, regional chair of Sodexo UK & Ireland said:

“Sodexo teams have moved quickly to set up COVID-19 testing centres as part of the industry-wide effort to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. The opening of the Edinburgh Airport testing site will mean more frontline NHS and other staff can be tested and cleared to provide care to those who need it most.”

“I am proud of our colleagues who are working together with pace and dedication to support the NHS.”

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport said:

“We understand that the coronavirus pandemic is a national issue that requires a national response, and we realise we have a role to play by offering up space that can be utilised for crucial testing.”

The Government is also urgently working on setting up a home-testing service for critical key workers, supported by Amazon’s logistics network and other commercial partners.

Companies House support for businesses hit by COVID-19

Businesses will be given additional support to help them meet their legal

responsibilities under changes announced today.

Companies House will temporarily pause the strike off process to prevent companies being dissolved. This will give businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak the time they need to update their records and help them avoid being struck off the register.

In addition, companies issued with a late filing penalty due to COVID-19 will have appeals treated sympathetically.

Today's announcement builds on measures already implemented by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which give businesses the ability to apply for a [3-month extension to file accounts with Companies House](#).

As part of the agreed measures, while companies will still have to apply for the 3-month extension to be granted, those citing issues around COVID-19 will be automatically and immediately granted an extension.

The Secretary of State has stated that we will continue to monitor what companies are filing and will provide further extensions if needed.

He also announced that the government will introduce legislation to ensure those companies required by law to hold Annual General Meetings (AGMs) will be able to do so safely, consistent with the restrictions on movement and gatherings introduced to address the spread of coronavirus.

Companies will temporarily be extended greater flexibilities, including holding AGMs online or postponing the meetings.

Martin Swain, Director of Strategy, Policy and Communications at Companies House said:

We know that many businesses are finding it difficult to keep up with their filing requirements at the moment.

We're committed to helping them meet their legal responsibilities while keeping the register as up to date as possible.

We will continue to contact customers to remind them of their responsibilities, and we encourage all companies to file their statutory documents as soon as they're able to do so.

- Companies House is the register of limited companies in the UK. It incorporates and dissolves limited companies, registers the information companies are legally required to supply, and makes that information available to the public.
- There are approximately 4.3 million companies on the Companies House register, and all companies must submit their accounts and a

confirmation statement each year. Companies that file accounts late are issued with an automatic penalty. Companies House also has powers to strike off a company from the register if these documents are not ultimately filed.

- For companies who make an application for voluntary dissolution, the DS01 (striking off application by a company) will be registered at Companies House and a notice published in the Gazette. However, after this point, any further action to strike off the company will be suspended.
- Any person with an interest in a business which is nearing strike off should [register an objection to dissolution at Companies House](#). This also applies to those who may have already registered an objection, but where the time period for that objection is due to expire.
- These changes do not apply to businesses which are being dissolved as the result of an insolvency procedure such as administration or liquidation. Businesses in this position will continue to be dissolved by operation of the Insolvency Act.
- This policy will be kept under review and amended as necessary in light of the progress of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Joint pledge to continue vital building safety work during pandemic

- Housing Secretary, Mayors and local leaders pledge to ensure vital building safety improvements continue during pandemic
- This will ensure the safety of those living in high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding or insufficient fire safety measures is prioritised
- Construction industry guidance published to reduce risk of spread of Covid-19 on site

Essential safety work to replace unsafe cladding on high-rise buildings will continue during the Covid-19 emergency, following a commitment from local

leaders to Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP.

The Mayors of Greater Manchester, Sheffield City Region, London, Liverpool City Region and the West Midlands have [pledged their commitment](#) to ensuring vital safety work can continue, where necessary social distancing rules are being followed. This action is to reassure those living in high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding that work to make their homes safe will be prioritised.

Earlier this year the government announced a new £1 billion fund to pay for the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding for high rise buildings.

The Pledge sets out a commitment to improving the safety of residential blocks whilst also ensuring those working on site are given clear information and support to guarantee their own safety as well as limiting the spread of Covid-19.

A number of sites across the country have been leading the way, adapting their procedures in ways that include:

- having decontamination areas on site, enabling workers to hose down overalls before safe disposal
- providing additional toilet and washing facilities, reducing the number of workers gathering together
- splitting up work teams with a view to minimising the risk of infection

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP said:

The government is bringing about the biggest change in building safety in a generation. The new building safety regime will put residents' safety at its heart and follows the announcement of the unprecedented £1 billion fund for removing unsafe cladding from high-rise buildings in the Budget.

However, I have been deeply concerned that vital building safety work has significantly slowed down as a result of the pandemic. I have been clear that work must resume to ensure the safety of residents living in buildings with unsafe cladding or with insufficient fire safety measures, and it is entirely possible for this work to be done safely within health guidelines.

I brought together Mayors and local leaders to find a solution. The agreement that I have reached with them will ensure those working on these vital repair projects can continue to do so safely.

Cllr Peter John, Chair of London Councils, said:

We cannot allow the unprecedented challenge that we have all faced with Covid-19 as an excuse to forget the challenge of making our buildings fire-safe across London and the UK.

Councils in London want to see our residents safe in their homes, so remediation work must continue urgently and building-owners and contractors must treat this work as an absolute priority.

The government has provided sector specific guidance on how to apply social distancing in the workplace in England. This was also reviewed by Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive and includes updated guidance for construction workers making clear that 'work on-site can continue if done in accordance with the social distancing guidelines wherever possible'.

Where work continues on-site, [detailed guidance is available from the Construction Leadership Council](#) on further reducing the risk, including measures for maintaining high standards of hygiene.

In order to support this vital work, the Ministry of Housing has appointed a firm of construction consultants, Faithful & Gould, to advise those planning and doing ACM cladding remediation work, including identifying and increasing awareness of safe practice under current Covid-19 restrictions.

The National Fire Chiefs Council has also published revised guidance on waking watch interim measures, in the context of Covid-19, that reflects higher rates of occupancy and vulnerability due to people staying home for an extended period of time.

This pledge has been agreed by The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) and the following local leaders:

- Andy Burnham (Mayor of Greater Manchester)
- Dan Jarvis (Mayor of the Sheffield City Region)
- Peter John (Chair of London Councils)
- Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London)
- Steve Rotherham (Mayor of the Liverpool City Region)
- Andy Street (Mayor of the West Midlands)

Civil Procedure Rule Committee: Annual open meeting 15 May 2020

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Councils given greater financial relief against cash flow pressures

New measures to help ease immediate financial pressures faced by councils in England due to the coronavirus outbreak have been announced by the government today (16 April 2020).

Councils will be allowed to defer £2.6 billion in business rates payments to central government, and £850 million in social care grants will be paid up front this month in a move aimed at helping to ease immediate pressures on local authority cash flows.

Councils are doing crucial work to help vulnerable people and the wider communities get through this crisis. This includes delivering essential supplies to the vulnerable, paying out financial relief to local businesses and get rough sleepers into accommodation. The government wants to ensure that they have the support they need at this unprecedented time.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Whether it be caring for the elderly, providing outpatient services, councils are providing vital support to the most vulnerable people in our society throughout this pandemic.

I am determined councils get the support they need which is why I am taking action to ease some of the immediate financial pressures they face in responding to coronavirus, helping to protect the NHS and save lives.

These new measures mean councils will be able to defer £2.6 billion of payments they are due to make to central government over the next 3 months as part of the business rates retention scheme.

Additionally, the government will bring forward care grant payments to councils worth £850 million for both children and adults. These will now all be paid this month, rather than monthly in April, May and June, and will help provide immediate support for core frontline social care services.