



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Lord Bethell
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation (Lords)*

39 Victoria Street
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Victoria Prentis MP
By email to: Victoria.Prentis.mp@parliament.uk

17 November 2020

Dear Victoria,

NHS Test and Trace in your constituency

I am writing to update you on the provision of coronavirus testing in Banbury.

Free and accessible testing is a cornerstone of the NHS Test and Trace service which brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management. This helps prevent the spread of the virus, protect local communities and save lives. The NHS Test and Trace service have processed more than 36 million coronavirus tests since the pandemic began¹. Additionally, the service has contacted and identified over 1.4 million people as recent close contacts² since the service began on 28 May 2020. This helps us get back to the things we love and enables people to see more of their friends and family, get businesses back on their feet and people in jobs.

I wanted to write to you to confirm that we are opening a Local Test Site in your constituency at the Woodgreen Leisure Centre, over the coming days. I hope this site will make it easier for many people in Banbury to access testing.

This site forms part of an expansion to open more 'walk-through' Local Test Sites across the UK, which are easily accessible by foot or by bicycle. These sites complement the regional drive-through testing network across the UK as well as home testing, both of which can be booked through the government's online portal. Mobile Testing Units are also travelling the UK, responding to increased regional demand for testing, and supporting hard to reach areas.

Before selecting this site, we have engaged with local government and public health stakeholders to narrow down the location and identify a suitable site. In order to reach a decision, we have considered which site is most suitable for best supporting communities in your constituency.

¹ <https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/details/testing> (Virus tests processed)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports> (first link, data tables, table 14)

This expansion of testing supports the existing NHS and Public Health England infrastructure, which has greatly increased its testing capacity since the coronavirus pandemic began. This supports our commitment to expand local direction of national testing resources and moving to a more locally owned and delivered testing model.

Across the UK, testing capacity has been expanded to more than 500,000 tests a day³. Anyone experiencing a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – should book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus, by calling 119, or using the NHS Covid-19 app.

In England, anyone testing positive for the virus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help them track their contacts. This will help people to identify who they may have been in close contact with, protecting others from further transmission.

If you choose to share this letter publicly, we would be grateful if you could wait until the 18th of November when the site is expected to open to the public.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the National Testing Programme Hub team at NTPHub@dhsc.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,



LORD BETHELL

³ <https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/details/testing> (Virus testing capacity)