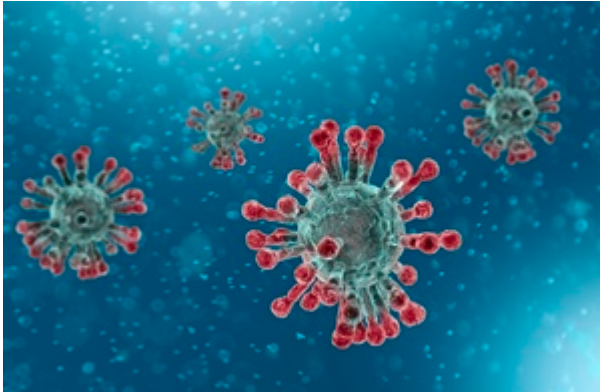


Further surge testing to be deployed in Birmingham

Press release

Additional surge testing and genomic sequencing deployed in Birmingham where a confirmed case of a variant of concern has been identified.



Additional testing and genomic sequencing is being provided in a targeted area within the Bordesley and Highgate ward in Birmingham by NHS Test and Trace in partnership with the local authority, after a confirmed case of the variant first identified in South Africa was found in the area.

This follows [recent surge testing in the Birmingham and Sandwell areas](#), although initial investigations indicate that this case is not linked to those cases. The confirmed case has self-isolated and their contacts have been identified.

This targeted approach will contact certain households in the Bordesley and Highgate area of Birmingham. Everybody aged 16 years and over in this area who is contacted and invited to take part is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not. By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify variant of concern cases and their spread.

As well as additional testing and genomic sequencing, enhanced contact tracing will be used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern. This is where contact tracers look back over an extended period in order to determine the route of transmission.

Testing, tracing and isolating those who test positive will reduce the risk of the virus spreading locally, whether they have a variant of concern or not. Everyone in this area, and the rest of Birmingham, should continue to follow government guidance and remember hands, face, space, fresh air, to help suppress the spread of the virus.

People with symptoms should [book a free test online](#) or by phone so they can get tested at a testing site or have a testing kit sent to them at home. Those without symptoms should [visit the local authority website](#) for more information.

People in this area should continue using twice-weekly rapid testing alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

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