

More than one million cases reached by NHS Test and Trace

- The proportion of contacts reached by the service increases substantially from 60.5% to 72.5%
- Turnaround times also continue to improve
- Charnwood Lighthouse lab begins processing tests

NHS Test and Trace is continuing to trace a larger proportion of people who have come into contact with someone with coronavirus, latest statistics show – further helping to break chains of transmission and save lives.

Measures such as improvements to the digital self-service, which make it faster and easier to provide tracing information, as well as changes to the process for contacting under-18s in a household, have begun to show tangible improvements, with 72.5% of contacts now reached, up from 60.5% in the previous week.

The changes were made following feedback from the public and local tracing partners, and have been positively received. We expect to see the number of contacts reached continue to improve following further changes introduced last week that streamline the process, so that adults in the same family can be traced via a single phone call.

These latest developments to the service have also seen the proportion of contacts completing within 24 hours increase as the service continues to evolve.

Thanks to continued increases in capacity, turnaround times for in-person test routes continue to improve. For this reporting period, 84.9% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 79.0% reported in the previous week. 88.5% of pillar 1 test results were made available within 24 hours, compared with 88.1% the previous week.

NHS Test and Trace has now reached more than one million cases (1,000,232) while in a further demonstration of a strong national and local partnership, 250 local tracing partnerships are now 'live' across the country – an increase of 50 since the previous week.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

These latest improvements once again demonstrate how NHS Test and Trace has grown from strength to strength since its launch. With the launch of the new lab at Charnwood we are striving to further increase our testing capacity. More than 41 million tests have now been processed, and with further infrastructure in development, this will continue to supplement our extensive work to improve contact tracing.

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

The figures this week are a testament to the efforts made by everyone working across Test and Trace. We have been working around the clock to ensure any new developments to the service have a positive impact and this is what our numbers show this week, particularly regarding turnaround times and completion rates.

We have listened to feedback on the contact-tracing process, particularly regarding our digital self-service channels to encourage those using NHS Test and Trace to engage with us and provide information. We will not stop there, though, and work will continue to ensure NHS Test and Trace evolves and grows. Charnwood Lighthouse Lab has begun to process tests this week which will further boost our testing capacity, which has continued to increase at pace since we began.

Adding a further 50 local tracing partnerships to the capability of NHS Test and Trace is also another significant step in supporting communities across the country through outbreaks in an ever more localised way.

Professor Isabel Oliver, National Infection Service Director at Public Health England, said:

It is fantastic to see so many local tracing partnerships now underway, giving us better insights on where transmission of infection is occurring. We're incredibly grateful to everyone involved in the national and local teams across the country who are working non-stop to help us combat the spread of the virus.

These vital partnerships will help us contact as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. Beating COVID-19 involves everyone working together and we hope that even more local authorities will join this vital work.

Testing

During the week of 19 to 25 November, 2,028,365 tests were processed for pillars 1 and 2.

More than 41 million tests have been conducted in total, more than any other comparable European country. With more than 700 test sites now in operation, the median distance travelled for a test has fallen again, to 2.4 miles. The new Lighthouse Lab at Charnwood began processing tests last week, and is expected to have capacity to test 50,000 samples a day by early 2021.

Testing capacity for those with COVID-19 symptoms has increased almost 5-fold

in 6 months, from 100,000 a day at the end of April to more than 500,000 a day by the end of October, with plans to go even further by the end of the year.

Tracing

116,324 positive cases were transferred to contact tracers between 19 and 25 November, 84.9% of whom were reached and told to self-isolate.

Between 19 November and 25 November, 246,604 people were identified as recent close contacts, with 83.8% reached and told to self-isolate (of those who had communication details). Since Test and Trace launched, 80.1% of close contacts have been reached.

Background information

The [weekly statistics from the 26th week of NHS Test and Trace](#) show in the most recent week of operations (19 to 25 November):

- a total of 2,028,365 tests were processed for pillars 1 and 2, compared with 2,097,167 the previous week
- 98,784 (84.9%) people who tested positive and were transferred to the contact-tracing system were reached and asked to provide information about their contacts, compared with 134,212 (85.7%) the previous week
- 83.8% of contacts where communication details were given were reached and told to self-isolate, compared with 77.9% the previous week
- 84.9% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 79.0% the previous week
- 54.2% of in-person test results were received within 24 hours after the test was taken, compared with 50.7% the previous week
- 95.2% of satellite (care home) tests were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 91.6% the previous week

Since NHS Test and Trace launched, over 3 million contacts have been identified, and 80.1% of all contacts where communication details were given have been reached and told to self-isolate.

Latest figures also show that the [NHS COVID-19 app](#) has been downloaded more than 20 million times since it was launched.