

Nearest testing site now on average under 2 miles away

NHS Test and Trace has maintained its strong start to the year, reaching more than 270,000 people in the latest reporting week with over 2.9 million people tested.

The service continues to reach a high proportion of cases and contacts, with people able to receive a test result more quickly and conveniently. The median distance that people will have travelled for a test is now just 1.9 miles, a record for the service compared with 5.1 miles as recently as September.

Of those who took their tests in-person at either a local or regional test centre or mobile testing unit, nearly all (96.1%) received their results the following day, while the median turnaround time for home test kits was 35 hours.

NHS Test and Trace has successfully reached 86.9% of cases, and 93.6% of their contacts, making a real impact in breaking chains of transmission. Since NHS Test and Trace launched, 90.0% of close contacts for whom communication details were provided have been reached.

Between 4 February and 10 February, 90.1% (155,206) of the contacts identified were reached within 3 days of the confirmed case. The median time taken for contacts to be reached after the positive case which identified them reported symptoms was 78 hours.

The [NHS COVID-19 app](#) has now been updated with the capability to alert users in postcode district areas where there is a variant of concern. This provides additional messaging to users, such as their eligibility for surge testing, and where to find more information.

NHS Test and Trace's test site network continues to expand. With more than 850 test sites in operation, including 484 local test sites, people are travelling a shorter distance than ever before to get a test.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

This week NHS Test and Trace has reached 86.9% positive cases and 93.6% contacts of those cases, leading to 270,865 people being told to isolate. Week after week these results continue to have a significant impact and, through the service's consistent performances we are seeing that our efforts are helping to halt the spread of the virus.

The number of rapid tests conducted across the country has continued to increase, ensuring NHS Test and Trace can identify people who are infectious, but not showing symptoms. Around one in

3 people with COVID-19 are asymptomatic which means every positive rapid test helps us break a chain of transmission we wouldn't have otherwise identified. We must ensure the service continues to evolve in order to continue breaking these links in the chain.

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

NHS Test and Trace has maintained a strong start to the year and is delivering consistent outputs to ensure the service continues to reach a high proportion of cases and contacts quickly and conveniently. The continued development of the service has been crucial to achieving this.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone involved in NHS Test and Trace who are working non-stop to help us combat the spread of the virus.

Testing

As of 16 February, more than 79 million tests have been processed in the UK in total since testing began, more than any other comparable European country. In total, almost 22.3 million people have now been tested at least once since NHS Test and Trace was launched – that equates to more than a third of all people in England.

In the latest reporting week, 2,400,724 rapid lateral flow device (LFD) tests were conducted, which is 18 times higher than mid-December, with 10,490,011 conducted in total since first introduced. Of the LFD tests conducted in the latest week, 7,548 LFD tests returned a positive result and 81,342 positive results have been reported since they were introduced.

The number of LFD tests has been increasing across all regions for the past 6 weeks, with most in this reporting week conducted in the South West followed by the North West.

Pillar 1 test results made available within 24 hours has increased to 97.4%, compared with last week's percentage of 96.6%. 96.7% of satellite tests were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 96.0% the previous week.

Tracing

So far, more than 8.8 million cases and contacts have been reached and told to self-isolate by contact tracers.

Tracing performance has remained high with 86.9% of cases and 93.6% of contacts reached last week. The proportion of contacts reached within 24 hours once identified as a contact was consistent with the previous week at 97.9%.

105,764 positive cases were transferred to contact tracers between 4 and 10 February, with 91,920 reached and told to self-isolate.

In total during the week of 4 to 10 February, 270,865 people who had either tested positive or been identified as a recent close contact were reached and told to self-isolate, people who might otherwise have gone on to unknowingly spread the virus.

More than 300 local authorities have joined forces with NHS Test and Trace to launch local tracing partnerships, combining specialist local expertise with the data and resources of NHS Test and Trace. These partnerships enable NHS Test and Trace to go further in supporting people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and tracing their recent contacts.

Background information

The [weekly statistics from the 37th week of NHS Test and Trace \(England\)](#) show in the most recent reporting week (4 to 10 February):

- the proportion of contacts reached by tracing service has remained consistent at 93.6%
- 86.9% of people who tested positive and were transferred to the contact-tracing system were reached and asked to provide information about their contacts, compared with 87.3% the previous week
- 96.5% of contacts where communication details were given were reached and told to self-isolate
- 96.1% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 97.6% of tests the previous week
- 97.4% of pillar 1 test results were made available within 24 hours, compared with 96.6% the previous week
- 85.4% of in-person test results were received within 24 hours after the test was taken, compared with 86.3% the previous week
- 96.7% of satellite test results were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 96.0% the previous week