New UK Government Covid testing site opens in Kilmarnock

The UK Government has today (Wednesday 16 December), opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre at the Grand Hall in Kilmarnock (KA3 7AA). The centre is easily accessible for people without a car.

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of six drive through sites, 21 walk-through sites, 21 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all COVID testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

Tests must be booked in advance at: NHS Inform or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book at test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste).

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

"To respond to the coronavirus, we have built a major testing and tracing system from scratch. We are constantly working to expand and improve it with new technologies and innovations so everyone with symptoms can get a test.

"New walk-in sites like this one makes it even easier to get a test no matter where you live. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted to protect others and stop the spread of the virus."

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

"Walk through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand our testing network across the UK which now has the capacity to process more than 500,000 tests a day. We will continue to expand capacity to improve test turnaround times and push forward testing innovations to make sure anyone who needs a test can get one.

"Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste, and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted."

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said:

"The UK Government is helping all parts of the UK fight the coronavirus pandemic.

"Testing is vital, helping to manage local outbreaks and protecting people's livelihoods. The UK Government is providing the bulk of Covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre is just the latest in our extensive testing network.

"We are pleased to be working with local and commercial partners. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people. I would like to thank everyone involved for their incredible efforts for the good of the country at this difficult time."

Lynne McNiven, Joint Director of Public Health for NHS Ayrshire & Arran, said:

"This testing centre in Kilmarnock will ensure those living in East Ayrshire have access to tests as quickly and easily as possible. This is vital so that we can identify cases quickly, allowing them to self-isolate and limit the spread of COVID-19."

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

"Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Kilmarnock, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe."