

# New UK Government Covid testing site opens in West Edinburgh

The UK Government opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre in West Edinburgh on Saturday 17 September. Located in the Gate 55 community hub in Sighthill, the site is easily accessible for people without a car.

The new facility is being provided by the UK Government as part of a UK-wide drive to continue to improve the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities. It is operated by Mitie on behalf of the UK Government.

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, nine walk-through sites, 20 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 [www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect](http://www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect) or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book a 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:

We continue to expand UK Government testing to make sure that everyone with symptoms can get a test, with our new walk-in sites making it even easier no matter where you live.

This new site forms part of our UK testing network, which has the capacity to test more than a million people a week and is growing all the time.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today, and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted to protect others around you and stop the spread of the virus.

This is a UK-wide effort and we are proud to be working with a number of partners to turn this ambition into a reality and roll out additional capacity to where it is needed.

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

The UK Government's new 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 testing across the UK to deliver 500,000 tests a day by the end of October.

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.

Everybody should continue to think hands, face, space, and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted – this is the only way we can return to a more normal way of life.

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.

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 Edinburgh, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.