

NHS Test and Trace hits record testing capacity as over 10 million people tested at least once

NHS Test and Trace figures published today show the service has now reached more than 1.7 million people, with more than 10 million people in the UK tested at least once. This week's figures come after the [government's announcement earlier in the week](#) that the target of reaching 500,000 testing capacity by the end of October has been exceeded.

A total of 32,745,923 tests have now been processed in the UK since the service began. 1,960,138 tests (pillars 1 and 2) were processed during the [week 22 to 28 October](#), an increase of 67,435 compared with the previous week. With 624 test sites already in operation and more opening every week, the median distance people are now travelling to a test centre has continued to decrease, to 2.7 miles.

Latest figures show an improvement in test turnaround times for all in-person tests routes. 61.8% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, meaning that 3 out of 5 people are receiving next day results. This is compared with 46.5% the previous week, while 86.1% of pillar 1 test results were made available within 24 hours. NHS Test and Trace focuses on using the increase in capacity to deliver ongoing improvements to turnaround times and these continue to trend positively.

With cases continuing to rise across the UK, and local tracing partnerships having been launched with 148 local authorities, the number of people reached by NHS Test and Trace has increased and people are being reached more quickly. During this reporting week, more than 115,660 people who tested positive were reached and asked for their contact details, 82.7% of the total number of people transferred into the contact tracing system. 3 out of 4 of these people were reached within 24 hours. A further 150 local tracing partnerships are in the process of being implemented.

The number of contacts identified is also increasing, up 14% from the previous week. For those where communication details were available, 77.8% were reached and asked to self-isolate. For contacts not managed by local health protection teams, 139,328 (75.4%) cases were reached within 24 hours, an improvement on previous weeks and the highest since the end of September.

The weekly statistics from the 22nd week of NHS Test and Trace show in the most recent week of operations (22 to 28 October):

- a total of 1,960,138 tests were processed (pillars 1 and 2), a 3.6% increase from the previous week
- 115,660 (82.7%) people who tested positive and were transferred to the contact-tracing system were reached and asked to provide information about their contacts, compared with 100,189 (83.2%) the previous week

- 196,067 (77.8%) contacts where communication details were given were reached and told to self-isolate, compared with 173,856 (74.6%) the previous week
- 61.8% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 46.5% the previous week
- 26.4% of in-person test results were received within 24 hours after the test was taken, compared with 22.6% the previous week
- 92.9% of satellite (care home) tests were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 91.0% the previous week, an increase of over 60 percentage points since the start of September despite over 4 times as many being received
- since NHS Test and Trace launched, over 1.8 million contacts have been identified, and 80.4% 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 19.2 million times since it was launched.

As a result of partnerships with NHS and university labs, new cutting-edge testing innovations and a recruitment drive boosting the UK's coronavirus diagnostic network, NHS Test and Trace has rapidly expanded testing capability ahead of winter. The government is committed to continue expanding the capacity of the network of UK test sites and laboratories to make it even easier to get tested and reduce the time it takes to receive test results. More than 3,000 new recruits have joined the lab network since April, while advances in innovation and technology continue to speed up processing and add to capacity.

This increase in testing capacity works to improve test turnaround times. It also allows us to expand our mass testing programme, giving us the spare capacity to undertake pilots such as the [Liverpool testing pilot](#) announced this week, as well as the [asymptomatic testing of NHS staff and professionals who regularly visit care homes](#).

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

Latest figures show NHS Test and Trace is processing more tests and reaching more people, which means we are finding positive cases and helping to break chains of transmission.

We know that there are areas where we still need to improve and we are working tirelessly to make the service quicker and more effective every day. We have expanded capacity to over 500,000 tests a day to help meet demand over the winter period and continue to improve test turnaround times. Increased capacity and testing innovations have also allowed us to start regular testing of staff across the NHS and care homes, which will start tomorrow.

NHS Test and Trace is a crucial weapon against this virus, but it is not a silver bullet. I urge everyone to follow new restrictions

and book a test if you have symptoms to help protect each other during this time.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

We have now reached the milestone of 500,000 testing capacity. This, alongside an ever growing network of test sites, more than 600 so far, means that those who need a test can get a test more easily than ever. Everybody involved in NHS Test and Trace should feel extremely proud of their achievements.

However, we do know that more needs to be done. We are constantly looking for new ways to improve the service, scoping out new technologies, partnerships and ways of working to equip us to better support our people, locally and nationally.

Maximum lab capacity is classed at around 85% of total capacity, in order to ensure that the system will operate safely and reliably – this approach aligns with other health and care systems.

See more on the [new guidance to support safe care home visits during lockdown](#).

[500,000 daily testing capacity reached in ongoing drive to boost test and trace](#)