

Perth COVID-19 regional testing centre to open for key workers

A drive-through coronavirus testing facility is to open at the Perth College UHI as part of the UK Government's UK-wide drive to increase testing for thousands more NHS and other key workers.

The site sits alongside a rapidly expanding network of testing sites being set up around the UK, and is operating on an appointment-only basis for NHS staff and other key workers. The facility, which is expected to open this week, will be piloted for its first few days of operation.

This follows the launch of the UK Government's partnership with universities, research institutes and companies to begin rollout of the network of new Lighthouse labs, including one in Glasgow, and testing sites across the UK, with 36 regional testing sites opened to date.

This network will provide thousands more PCR swab tests – which are used to identify if you currently have the virus – for critical key workers, starting with NHS front line staff. This means those who test negative for coronavirus can return to work as soon as possible, and those who test positive are able to recover.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

“The UK Government is rapidly scaling up the national effort to boost testing capacity for coronavirus to protect the vulnerable, support our NHS, and ultimately save lives.

“This new service will help end the uncertainty of whether NHS and social care staff and other key workers need to stay at home, meaning those who test negative will be able to return to work.

“This is a national 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.”

Professor John Newton, National Coordinator for the UK Coronavirus Testing Strategy, said:

“New testing sites such as this one are a key pillar of our 5-pillar plan to scale up testing, and are critical in supporting NHS staff and other frontline workers who are isolating at home to return safely to work if the test is negative.”

“This is a brilliant example of industries and businesses turning their resources to creating and rolling out mass testing at scale, which will help to deliver on our aim of carrying out 100,000 tests a day across the UK by the end of the month.”

The testing centre will be operated in partnership with Mitie and offer self-administered tests. Those tested will receive their results within a few days.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Douglas Ross said:

“This new UK Government-funded testing centre in Perth will help key workers in the area continue their vital work, helping to look after those who need it most. The UK Government is expanding our COVID-19 testing capacity right across the UK. This new centre means that five drive-through centres will be operating in Scotland. We will continue to work for everyone in the UK to save lives and protect our NHS.”

Perth College UHI Principal Margaret Cook said:

“We are pleased to host this COVID-19 test centre at our Crieff Road campus. Many of our students and staff are undertaking key worker roles at this time and it’s great to see an increase in testing being implemented to support this group continue their excellent work to fight this pandemic.”

Simon Venn, Chief Government & Strategy Officer, Mitie, 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 Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Perth who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.”

The UK Government has also set up a home-testing service for critical key workers, supported by Amazon’s logistics network and other commercial partners.