

Rosalind Franklin laboratory processes 5 million PCR tests

News story

The lab opened in Royal Leamington Spa in June 2021 and is the biggest of its kind in the UK, playing a vital role in efforts to combat the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).



With around 700 staff members, the lab processes polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests and carries out genomic sequencing. It has also recently started using new reflex assay technology. These services are helping to rapidly detect COVID-19 mutations and support the assessment of variants of concern.

Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Dame Jenny Harries, said:

This milestone highlights the ongoing hard work and dedication of those who work at the Rosalind Franklin laboratory. Their contribution has been vital to helping ongoing efforts to combat COVID-19.

Every member of the lab's team has played a crucial role in the COVID-19 pandemic; every test they've processed has supported the reduction of transmission of the virus in our communities and helped to understand our progress in controlling the pandemic.

Minister for Vaccines and Public Health, Maggie Throup, who visited the laboratory today for a tour of the facilities, said:

I am delighted to have visited the Rosalind Franklin lab and to have seen first-hand the scale of our world-leading testing programme. My thanks to the whole team for their continuing hard work in supporting the nation as we learn to live with COVID-19.

Testing remains a crucial measure in managing this virus and detecting variants – everyone here should be incredibly proud of the role they have played.

The lab is helping with the response to the ongoing pandemic. At its peak, in December 2021, the lab was processing 400,000 PCR tests a week.

The laboratory also aims to help create the next generation of scientists. Four PhD students from University of Warwick successfully completed their placements last year and 11 undergrad students from the University of Warwick and Birmingham City University are currently carrying out placements – spending time with various departments, including logistics and quality assurance.

Published 10 February 2022