

# Rosalind Franklin laboratory processes one millionth PCR test

Press release

One million COVID-19 tests have been processed at the new megalab in Leamington Spa using cutting-edge testing technology including top of the range robotics.



Opened in June 2021 the laboratory is part of the current Test and Trace network and is at the heart of the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) plans for managing coronavirus (COVID-19), including through scaled up genome sequencing capacity.

In the coming weeks the laboratory will begin genotype assay testing to rapidly detect known COVID-19 mutations and genome sequencing to confirm known variants and identify any new mutations.

The megalab is the biggest of its kind in the UK and has created employment for local people, with 600 new staff already. Around 60% of staff hired so far are from within 30 miles of the laboratory site in Leamington Spa.

Chief Executive of the UKHSA Jenny Harries said:

This milestone is a real testament to the hard work, dedication and collaboration between teams across the public sector, academia and industry.

While the phenomenal vaccine rollout has helped to build a wall of defence across the country, testing and isolating when needed remains vital to controlling the spread of the virus and protecting one another.

The laboratory is using a robust programme of training to create and upskill scientists and is working closely with local universities to inspire students to choose a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics

(STEM).

To date, 11 undergraduates from University of Warwick and Birmingham City University and 4 PhD students from University of Warwick have begun placements at the laboratory, gaining testing experience and developing their skills in a real world setting.

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