

# Surge testing to be deployed in areas within Middlesbrough, Walsall, and Hampshire in connection to new variant



Working in partnership with the local authorities, additional surge testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to targeted areas within parts of the TS7 and TS8 postcodes of Middlesbrough, areas in Walsall and in specific areas in the RG26 postcode in Hampshire where the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

Surge testing is being introduced in addition to existing extensive testing, and in combination with following the lockdown rules and remembering Hands Face Space, will help to monitor and suppress the spread of the virus.

Positive cases will be sequenced for genomic data to help understand COVID-19 variants and their spread within these areas.

People living within these targeted areas are strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 test this week, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

People with symptoms should book a test in the usual way, and those without symptoms should visit their local authority website for more information.

Surge testing in the Egham and Broxbourne areas, which began on February 6 and February 1, is now complete and further data on surge testing will be provided in due course.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Middlesbrough Council will deploy a Mobile Testing Unit from Saturday and encourage residents from a targeted area to come forward for a test.

The surge testing operation in parts of Walsall has been extended in response to a confirmed second case of the variant first identified in South Africa which is not believed to be linked to international travel. Surge testing in response to the first case has now been completed.

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1. 13 February 2021

Additional postcode in Middlesbrough added to the testing areas

2. 13 February 2021

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