

Surge testing to be deployed in Sandwell and Birmingham

Press release

Additional surge testing provided following identification of COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa.



Working in partnership with the local authorities, NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing in a targeted area within B66 3, B66 4 and B67 6 postcode areas in Smethwick/Cape Hill, Sandwell and Ladywood, Jewellery Quarter and Soho wards in Birmingham following the identification of a confirmed case of the variant first identified in South Africa.

The confirmed case is self-isolating and their contacts have been identified.

Everybody aged 16 years and over who resides or works in these Sandwell and Birmingham postcodes is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

Enhanced contact tracing will be used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern. This is where contact tracers look back over an extended period in order to determine the route of transmission.

By using PCR testing, positive results can be sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify variant of concern cases and their spread.

People with symptoms should book a free test online or by phone so they can get tested at a testing site or have a testing kit sent to them at home. Those without symptoms should visit their local authority websites – [Sandwell](#) and [Birmingham](#) – for more information.

People in this areas should continue using twice-weekly rapid testing alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

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