

# Surge testing to be deployed in Southwark

Press release

NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing in a targeted area within Southwark, South London where the variant first identified in South Africa has been found.



Working in partnership with the local authority, NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing in a targeted area within SE16 in Southwark where an additional confirmed case of the variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

Genomic sequencing results indicate that this case is linked to the cluster identified in Lambeth and Wandsworth. The confirmed case is self-isolating and their contacts have been identified.

This targeted approach will contact certain households in Southwark, due to lower confirmed case numbers. These households will either get a leaflet asking them to get a test from a specially deployed mobile testing unit, or be asked to complete a home kit by a door-to-door team. Everybody aged 11 years and over in this area who is contacted and invited to take part is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

Enhanced contact tracing is 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 in this area should continue using twice-weekly rapid testing alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

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 the local authority website for more information: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/>

Dr Kevin Fenton, Regional Director, PHE London and Regional Director of Public Health, NHS London:

The cluster of cases in parts of South London – predominantly the Lambeth and Wandsworth areas but also in Southwark – of the variant first identified in South Africa is significant. It's really important people in the local area play their part in stopping any further spread within the local community.

PCR testing is now available for all and I would strongly encourage everyone in Southwark who is invited to take part to get tested, even if they don't have any symptoms of coronavirus.

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 don't show any symptoms. By taking part you can protect yourselves and your loved ones and help us identify any possible new cases that would otherwise be missed, preventing further transmission and saving lives.

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