

Surge testing to be deployed in Wandsworth and Lambeth

Press release

NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing across parts of South London where the variant first identified in South Africa has been found.



Working in partnership with the local authorities, NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing across parts of South London, predominantly the boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth, where 44 confirmed cases, and 30 probable cases, of the variant first identified in South Africa have been found. All identified cases are isolating or have completed their isolation, and their contacts have been traced and asked to isolate.

The first case of the variant in the area was identified in early March.

Everybody aged 11 years and over who resides in, works in, or travels through these boroughs is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not. This is the largest surge testing operation to date and aims to help control and suppress any possible new cases of the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa.

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 in these boroughs. People in Lambeth and Wandsworth 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 [Lambeth](#) or [Wandsworth](#) local authority website for more information.

Dr Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser for NHS Test and Trace said:

The cluster of cases of the variant first identified in South Africa found in parts of South London, predominantly the Lambeth and Wandsworth areas 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, whether they live, work or travel through the boroughs, 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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