

Greens reveal coronavirus testing postcode lottery



Green Party

3 August 2020

- **Data shows Cardiff test results take on average up to 34 hours longer than Milton Keynes**
- **Freedom of Information request shows worrying disparity across country, and gaps in the Department for Health's information**
- **Jenny Jones: "Our testing system should not be a complete postcode lottery"**

People taking coronavirus tests face a worrying postcode lottery in the time it takes to get results, with some parts of the country waiting on average up to 34 hours longer than others, the Green Party can reveal.

Data obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request has revealed that the longest delay was in Cardiff where people had to wait an average of 45 hours. [1]

The second longest delay was in Wembley, London, where people waited an average of 33 hours, and Lincoln had the third longest wait with 24 hours.

Meanwhile, those with the shortest wait were Milton Keynes, Glasgow and Llandudno with average times of 11, 12 and 13 hours respectively.

The data shows four of the testing sites, including the Nightingale Excel Walk In, are taking on average longer than the target set by Boris Johnson of 24 hours. [2]

Green Party peer Jenny Jones said:

"Our testing system should not be a complete postcode lottery with over a full day's difference in waiting time for results between some regional testing centers.

"We need Johnson to meet his commitment for all tests to be returned well under 24 hours, and we must level up all testing sites to the highest possible standards of efficiency."

The FOI request also revealed that the Department of Health had no records on

how many results of tests are unsuccessfully returned to those who took the tests.

Wales Green Party leader Anthony Slaughter said:

“At a time when lockdown measures have been significantly relaxed across Wales, the news that the average time taken to receive Covid- 19 test results in Cardiff is forty five hours is a deeply worrying failure on the part of Public Health Wales.

“This unacceptable delay is endangering public health and reducing the efficiency of any attempts at a meaningful Test, Track and Isolate strategy.”

Caroline Russell, Green Party London Assembly member, said:

“As we are being encouraged back to city centres and to reopen more parts of the economy, it’s worrying to hear there are such disparities in the time taken to return test results.

“Every hour counts as we try to stay on top of the virus and contact the people who have been in touch with confirmed cases so they can isolate to keep others safe.

“It’s not fair to affected communities if the time taken to get test results is letting down the track and trace system.”

ENDS

Notes

1

The data provided was for the period 6 July 2020 to 12 July 2020 inclusive. It refers to the median hours from the time of test to the time of result communicated.

By RTS Site

ACF Code	Site Name	Median Hours
DFW	RTS – Cardiff City Football Club	45.13
WEM	RTS – Wembley	33.09
LNC	RTS – Lincoln	24.63
NGE	RTS – Nightingale Excel Walk-in	24.09
LEE	RTS – Leeds	23.31
LEI	RTS – Leicester	22.66
MDE	RTS – Birmingham Smethwick	22.24
STK	RTS – Stoke	22.13
NTM	RTS – Nottingham	22.09
HUL	RTS – Hull	22.03
DEE	RTS – Deeside	21.93
BRM	RTS – Birmingham Edgbaston	21.57

YOR	RTS – York	21.52
STA	RTS – Stafford	21.50
BRA	RTS – Bradford	21.36
TEL	RTS – Telford	21.26
IOW	RTS – Isle of Wight	21.08
DNE	RTS – Doncaster Airport, Sheffield	20.97
SHF	RTS – Sheffield	20.94
NOT	RTS – Nottingham Motorpoint	20.91
WRE	RTS – Worcester	20.76
COV	RTS – Coventry	20.75
PRE	RTS – Preston College	20.43
BLA	RTS – Blackburn	19.64
RMA	RTS – Ramsgate	19.32
PYE	RTS – Plymouth	19.27
SAL	RTS – Salisbury	19.12
CPR	RTS – Bournemouth	19.09
DCR	RTS – Derry City Rugby Club, Londonderry	18.98
GLO	RTS – Gloucester	18.97
BLE	RTS – Belfast Odyssey Arena	18.95
ENN	RTS – Enniskillen	18.84
WOB	RTS – Abercynon	18.83
EXE	RTS – Exeter	18.81
TAU	RTS – Taunton	18.66
NEW	RTS – Newbury	18.63
TIP	RTS – Portsmouth	18.59
POR	RTS – Portadown	18.56
EBV	RTS – Ebbw Vale	18.34
BRE	RTS – Bristol Airport	18.24
SWI	RTS – Swindon	17.94
HYE	RTS – Haydock Race Course	17.90
GWE	RTS – Gatwick Airport	17.22
ABE	RTS – Aberdeen Airport	17.20
MCM	RTS – Manchester Airport	17.05
IVE	RTS – Inverness	16.92
HEA	RTS – Heathrow	16.82
SLO	RTS – Slough	16.74
LIV	RTS – Liverpool Airport	16.41
LVE	RTS – Edmonton Lee Valley	16.33
MES	RTS – Manchester Etihad Stadium	16.27
PRS	RTS – Prestwick	16.22
AFE	RTS – Ashford	16.12
GUD	RTS – Guildford	16.10
PBO	RTS – Peterborough	15.99
PFK	RTS – Penrith	15.98

PER	RTS – Perth	15.88
CAM	RTS – Cambridge	15.87
EBB	RTS – Ebbsfleet	15.79
NWE	RTS – Newcastle Great Park & Ride	15.74
CHE	RTS – Chessington	15.70
NRW	RTS – Norwich	15.48
SAE	RTS – Stansted Airport	15.33
OXF	RTS – Oxford Parkway	15.26
TWE	RTS – Twickenham Stadium	15.14
BGE	RTS – Brighton	15.06
GRE	RTS – Greenwich	14.66
IWE	RTS – Ipswich	14.54
EDE	RTS – Edinburgh Airport	14.22
TPR	RTS – Oxford	14.09
WEL	RTS – Welwyn Garden City	14.07
DWR	RTS – Llandudno Coach Park	13.58
GLM	RTS – Glasgow Airport	12.59
MKE	RTS – Milton Keynes	11.31

2

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/boris-johnson-covid-tests-24-hours-by-end-of-june_uk_5ed76617c5b6a209e0b9dc16

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[‘Test and trace has failed’: Green Party response to new lockdown measures](#)



Green Party

31 July 2020

The Government has announced new lockdown measures in parts of northern England that bans separate households from meeting at home.

Councillor Andy Fewings, leader of the Green Party Group on Burnley Council, said:

“Test and trace has failed. Announcing major new lockdown measures on Twitter with less than three hours’ notice on the night before Eid is shambolic to say the least, while placing the blame on individuals is nothing short of unforgivable.

“The Government has to take responsibility for its own failings, including its increasingly mixed and confusing messages and a test and trace system that is clearly not fit for purpose.

“The Government must stop blaming communities and start transferring money and responsibility to the local public health teams who are already in place with the necessary expertise and trust within their communities to deliver an effective and transparent test and trace system.”

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Government's cycling plans will need more funding to see real change – Caroline Russell



Green Party

28 July 2020

The government has announced plans to encourage cycling and walking to be funded by a previously announced £2 billion over five years. [1]

Green Party transport spokesperson Caroline Russell said:

“It’s great to see the new design guidance, proposed Highway Code updates and such enthusiastic government support for protected bike lanes and low traffic neighbourhoods.

“These transformative measures will properly enable people to make local trips safely on foot and by bike. But if we are going to see a measurable change in the way people get around, the government needs to find a lot more than £2billion.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-kickstarts-2bn-cycling-and-walking-revolution>

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[Greens in administration in Brighton and Hove City Council following Labour resignations](#)



Green Party

24 July 2020

- Green Party now in administration in 18 councils across the country
- Green group has pledged to focus on helping city through coronavirus crisis
- Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty: “Greens are united in our determination to see the city through our many current challenges and will work with

all parties in order to get this achieved”

The Green Party is now running Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) as a minority administration after two Labour resignations tipped the balance of power.[1]

The Greens were left the largest party on the council with 19 councillors after Labour were left with 18 councillors following the resignations.

A motion to transfer power to the Greens was passed at a full council meeting yesterday [Thursday 23 July]. It means the Green Party is now in administration in 18 councils across the country – the highest number in its history.

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty has now become the council leader, while Councillor Hannah Clare and Councillor Sue Shanks are deputy leaders.

Caroline Lucas, Green MP for Brighton Pavilion, said:

“This is a critical time for our city which faces a multitude of challenges, among them the impact of Covid-19 on our communities and economy, the desperation of the homeless and the accelerating climate and nature crisis.

“I know Phélim Mac Cafferty and his colleagues will do everything they can to address these and other challenges, and will work tirelessly and cross-party for the good of our amazing city.

“I will continue to press ministers to make good on their promises from the spring to ‘do whatever is necessary to support councils in their response to coronavirus’. The reality is that BHCC is facing a funding shortfall of as much as £39 million because of the impact of the virus, and the Government’s commitment of £500 million shared across more than 360 councils in England and Wales isn’t going to do much to close the gap.”

Green peer Jenny Jones, Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb, said:

“I’m delighted that in my home town the Greens have a chance to benefit every community and implement measures that will make a safe and secure future for all.

“This is clearly a difficult time for everybody in Brighton and Hove, but let’s hope the whole council pulls together to build back better and ensure we have a green recovery from coronavirus.

“However, with the Greens in control we can be confident that the needs and the well-being of the local community will always be put first during this crisis.”

Councillor Mac Cafferty said:

“The Greens are proud to be leading Brighton and Hove City Council and we will do everything in our power to ensure our city and its residents are supported at a time of crisis.

“Now more than ever the people of Brighton and Hove deserve a green recovery from the Covid-19 crisis and we stand fully behind initiatives such as the mass insulation of homes, that will create jobs, reduce emissions and warm peoples’ homes.

“We have come into administration when the council’s finances are the worst we have ever known them and around the country the outlook for local government has never been bleaker with several councils now on the verge of bankruptcy.

“Residents at this time expect all of us to play our part for the city and we will work cross party where possible when it is in our city’s best interests to do so. We are united in our determination to see the city through our many current challenges and will work with all parties in order to get this achieved.”

Further details of the group’s plans will be unveiled in the coming weeks.

ENDS

Notes

1

A motion to transfer power to the Greens was passed at a full council meeting on Thursday 23 July

<https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2020/update-green-administration-brighton-hove-city-council>

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[Greens Party motion to demand basic income pilot in Norwich is passed unanimously](#)



Green Party

21 July 2020

Norwich City Council has tonight unanimously passed a Green Party motion calling on the government to trial a fully evaluated basic income in the city in response to the economic shock of the coronavirus crisis.[1]

Leaders of all political parties on Norwich City Council will now write to the Good Economy Commission for Norwich, the secretary of state for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor, the Prime Minister, and all opposition party leaders to ask for a UBI trial in the city of Norwich after passing the motion this evening.

It would mean each citizen in Norwich would receive a monthly income to cover the basic costs of living, regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status.

This is the first such council motion calling for a trial specifically as response to coronavirus, citing the threat of many Norwich citizens being plunged into poverty, and the shortcomings of Universal Credit.

The last year has seen the number of people claiming the Universal Credit benefit in Norwich more than double, from just over 3,000 in March 2019 to more than 7,200 in March 2020. [2]

Responding to the news the motion had passed, Green Party peer Natalie Bennett said:

“The economic crisis is only just getting started, but the Government is already turning its back on millions of people. The furlough scheme is winding down, and job losses have started gushing like a burst pipe, with hundreds of livelihoods down the drain every single day.

“We need a universal basic income to ensure that nobody is left high and dry. By ensuring that every single one of us has enough to meet our basic needs, we have a better chance of weathering this storm together.

“The Government should agree to this trial in Norwich so they can see for themselves how effective it will be.”

The council has called for the evaluation of such a trial to look beyond how many people are able to take up paid work as a result, but also to look at the impact on communities, and people’s attitudes towards each other, and their environment.

Norwich Green Party councillor Jamie Osborn said: "I'm delighted that Norwich councillors have today unanimously supported the Green Party proposal for a Universal Basic Income. Even before lockdown I was appalled by the number of people in my ward who were humiliated and excluded by our current benefits system, and that number is only going up.

"But this motion is also about looking longer-term at the kind of society we want. A Universal Basic Income would mean people can spend more time on education and training, or starting their own business, and it would be vital for the arts. With this motion Norwich has recognised the society-wide benefits of a UBI, and we'll now be working with other local and national organisations to get the Government to listen."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://norwich.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/07/16/council-could-support-a-universal-basic-income-pilot-in-norwich/>

2

<https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/business/universal-credit-claims-soar-in-coronavirus-lockdown-1-6655681>

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