

# Perth COVID-19 regional testing centre to open for key workers

A drive-through coronavirus testing facility is to open at the Perth College UHI as part of the UK Government's UK-wide drive to increase testing for thousands more NHS and other key workers.

The site sits alongside a rapidly expanding network of testing sites being set up around the UK, and is operating on an appointment-only basis for NHS staff and other key workers. The facility, which is expected to open this week, will be piloted for its first few days of operation.

This follows the launch of the UK Government's partnership with universities, research institutes and companies to begin rollout of the network of new Lighthouse labs, including one in Glasgow, and testing sites across the UK, with 36 regional testing sites opened to date.

This network will provide thousands more PCR swab tests – which are used to identify if you currently have the virus – for critical key workers, starting with NHS front line staff. This means those who test negative for coronavirus can return to work as soon as possible, and those who test positive are able to recover.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

“The UK Government is rapidly scaling up the national effort to boost testing capacity for coronavirus to protect the vulnerable, support our NHS, and ultimately save lives.

“This new service will help end the uncertainty of whether NHS and social care staff and other key workers need to stay at home, meaning those who test negative will be able to return to work.

“This is a national effort and we are proud to be working with a number of partners to turn this ambition into a reality and roll out additional capacity to where it is needed.”

Professor John Newton, National Coordinator for the UK Coronavirus Testing Strategy, said:

“New testing sites such as this one are a key pillar of our 5-pillar plan to scale up testing, and are critical in supporting NHS staff and other frontline workers who are isolating at home to return safely to work if the test is negative.”

“This is a brilliant example of industries and businesses turning their resources to creating and rolling out mass testing at scale, which will help to deliver on our aim of carrying out 100,000 tests a day across the UK by the end of the month.”

The testing centre will be operated in partnership with Mitie and offer self-administered tests. Those tested will receive their results within a few days.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Douglas Ross said:

“This new UK Government-funded testing centre in Perth will help key workers in the area continue their vital work, helping to look after those who need it most. The UK Government is expanding our COVID-19 testing capacity right across the UK. This new centre means that five drive-through centres will be operating in Scotland. We will continue to work for everyone in the UK to save lives and protect our NHS.”

Perth College UHI Principal Margaret Cook said:

“We are pleased to host this COVID-19 test centre at our Crieff Road campus. Many of our students and staff are undertaking key worker roles at this time and it’s great to see an increase in testing being implemented to support this group continue their excellent work to fight this pandemic.”

Simon Venn, Chief Government & Strategy Officer, Mitie, said:

“Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation’s efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK’s strategy to combat coronavirus and we’re proud to support the Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Perth who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.”

The UK Government has also set up a home-testing service for critical key workers, supported by Amazon’s logistics network and other commercial partners.

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## **Extra month to claim for farm payments**

The Government has confirmed the window to submit applications for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and make a claim for Countryside Stewardship (CS), Environmental Stewardship (ES) and woodland legacy revenue payments will be extended by one month.

In light of the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak, farmers and land managers will now have until 15 June to submit their applications without penalty. This will give farmers and their agents an extra month to submit applications and claims, helping them to avoid penalties for late applications.

Farmers and land managers are still encouraged to submit claims and

applications, in particular online for BPS and CS through the Rural Payments Service, as soon as they are able to, with a large number already received by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

The RPA will continue to monitor the situation carefully and consider if further measures are needed to support farmers. Applications for new CS [Higher Tier](#) and [Mid Tier](#) agreements are still being accepted ahead of their respective deadlines of 1 May and 31 July 2020.

RPA Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

We're fully focused on making vital payments to the rural community and helping customers submit their claims and applications during this difficult time.

We know the coronavirus is causing issues where farmers are unable to meet their agents, so we are making this extension to allow more time for the farming community to submit their applications and claims without penalty.

I would urge farmers and their agents to complete their applications and claims as soon as they are able to, using the Rural Payments Service in the first instance.

In addition the period for amending your claim without penalty has also been extended to 30 June 2020 with final submission of applications and claims now to be with the RPA by 10 July 2020.

All applicants can quickly update their personal and business information and apply or claim through the [Rural Payments Service](#), where farmers and their agents can also view and transfer their entitlements and land parcels.

Natural England and Forestry Commission staff are continuing to provide advice by phone or video call for land managers developing Higher Tier applications in time for the 1 May application deadline, so that schemes can be progressed in the absence of a site visit.

Natural England will also be supporting Mid Tier applicants through an off-farm advice programme whereby applicants can [contact an adviser](#) and book a clinic session. Applicants will receive advice on the options most appropriate to their holding and top tips on ensuring applications are correct.

## **Vigilance against fraud**

In these challenging times, people need to remain vigilant against fraudsters will try to take advantage.

We will not call you or send you emails or texts asking you to confirm your personal details or payment information.

- Never discuss your bank account details with someone you do not know
- We will not ask you to make a payment over the phone
- Delete any emails or texts you do not believe are genuine
- Do not open any links unless from our main email addresses:
  - ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk
  - rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk
  - ruralpayments@rpa.emails.com
  - rdpenetwork@defra.gov.uk
- Be cautious about what information you share externally, particularly on social media

If you suspect an attempted fraud or feel you have been the subject of fraud, you can contact RPA's Fraud Referral Team on 0800 347 347 or [FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk](mailto:FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk)

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## **Letter from the Paymaster General to the European Commission and the European External Action Service: 27 April 2020**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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## **Recruitment for Independent Reviewer of Prevent launched**

News story

The government has launched an open competition to appoint the next Independent Reviewer of Prevent.



The government has launched the recruitment process for the Independent Reviewer of the Prevent programme.

The Independent Review of Prevent will look at the effectiveness of the government's strategy to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. It will also make recommendations for the future.

Security Minister James Brokenshire said:

Prevent gives vulnerable people the support they need to protect them from terrorist recruiters.

We are always looking at how we can make the programme more effective, which is why we are committed to this Independent Review.

I look forward to the appointment of the Reviewer so they can get on with their vital work.

The appointment of the next reviewer will be through a full and open competition. This will involve an advisory assessment panel, with an independent chair, that will review the applications and interview shortlisted candidates.

Applications for this post will be open until 11pm on 22 June.

You can find out how to apply on the [HM government public appointments website](#).

The government has adapted the recruitment process around the UK's coronavirus restrictions while ensuring a fair and open competition. This includes planning for remote interviews.

Find out more about the [Independent Review of Prevent](#).

Note: This article was updated on 2 June 2020 to reflect the fact that the application period has been extended. This is in recognition of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and to ensure that as broad a range of candidates as possible have the opportunity to apply

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1. 2 June 2020

Updated to explain that the application deadline has been extended to 11pm on 22 June.

2. 27 April 2020

First published.

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## [A proud partnership, a cherished friendship – UK and Israel united for 70 years](#)

Anniversaries are a good time to reflect, to look back on how events have shaped us and dwell on happy memories. They are also a time to look to the future, set goals, and make plans for the future. And it is with that sense of optimism, this week, that we mark the 70th anniversary of the UK opening its embassy in Tel Aviv, beginning the UK's diplomatic relations with Israel.

Over those 70 years we have seen engagements between Her Majesty the Queen and Israeli Presidents Haim Herzog, Ezer Weizman and Shimon Peres. In 2018 HRH Prince William visited Israel and met Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Rivlin, Holocaust survivors, activists and even carved out some time to meet Israeli Eurovision sensation Netta.

The Prime Minister was pleased to host Prime Minister Netanyahu at Downing Street last year, while earlier this year, HRH The Prince of Wales visited Israel to speak at a Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial ceremony and joined world leaders in Jerusalem to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz.

I know what an amazing place Israel is to visit having had the chance to do so shortly after becoming an MP in 2015. A country with antiquity and modernity side by side, things that seem familiar to my British eyes and things which are fascinating and unique. A country proud of its modern science and technology sectors and also home to some of the most holy places in the world.

I had hoped that my work as minister responsible for the Middle East and North Africa might give me the chance to go back to a fantastic fish restaurant on the waterfront at Jaffa, listen to the call to evening prayer from the mosque while watching the sun set over the Mediterranean Sea.

Unfortunately Covid-19 means that I, like people in Tel Aviv, will have to wait before dining there again.

But even in these challenging times, this anniversary week gives us both cause for optimism. The UK and Israel are working side by side in the fight against coronavirus, with our top health and scientific advisers sharing information and exchanging valuable insights into how to manage and ultimately beat the pandemic. Our respective world-class hospitals and laboratories are working together to support the development of antibody treatments for patients and discussing ground-breaking innovations, from tracing apps to potential vaccines.

Of course, the ties between UK and Israel go far beyond scientific cooperation. High tech-collaboration is also thriving, with Israeli start-ups working with the UK's biggest companies in health, finances, pharma, energy and more. Leading British firm Dyson is using Israeli technology in its appliances and Israeli MobilEye's systems work to reduce road traffic accidents and protect cyclists and pedestrians across Britain. The UK is Israel's biggest trading partner in Europe: our trade has been growing steadily over the years, and in recent years we have seen annual trade exceed £8 billion, according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. In 2016, the UK signed its biggest-ever trade deal with Israel, with Rolls Royce providing £1 billion of engines to El Al's new Dreamliner planes. UK-Israeli trade and collaboration touches every aspect of our lives and helps build a more prosperous future for both our countries.

Of course, the prosperity of Israel and the UK is inextricably linked to the stability of the wider Middle East. I am a firm believer that a negotiated agreement between Israel and the Palestinians for a two-state solution is the best way to secure enduring stability and success. As Israel's new government gets to work, I encourage both sides to focus on that great, if sometimes elusive, prize; sustainable peace. I urge both to continue to build on the constructive collaboration that they have shown during this pandemic and find ways to return to the table. I hope that steps on the road towards lasting peace are taken, and pathways that might lead away from that goal are avoided.

Much changes over a 70 year period but some things do not change. We will continue to cherish our friendship with Israel, stand united in the struggle against the insidious forces of hate and antisemitism and work towards an even brighter and better future for us all.

Here's to the next 70 years! Am Yisrael Chai.

**Further information**