

Testing capacity increases as second Lighthouse Lab becomes fully operational

- The lab is part of what will be the biggest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history, testing samples from drive-through test sites across the country
- Testing Minister Lord Bethell has today personally thanked the teams staffing the new Lighthouse Labs for their efforts to rapidly scale coronavirus testing

The second Lighthouse Lab in Alderley Park is now operational, testing thousands of patient samples each day for coronavirus.

The lab will help rapidly increase the country's capacity to test for coronavirus to tens of thousands of samples each day.

Alderley Park is the second site to become fully operational, after the Health Secretary officially opened the first Lighthouse Lab in Milton Keynes last week. The final site will open in Glasgow next week, completing the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history.

Testing Minister Lord Bethell spoke to teams at the 2 fully operational Lighthouse Labs on Friday to thank them for their tireless efforts to rapidly scale up testing and was taken on [a virtual tour of the new site at Alderley Park](#).

Lighthouse Labs in Milton Keynes, Alderley Park and Glasgow have increased their staff with teams of highly qualified volunteers from industry and academia, supporting them to rapidly set up facilities with huge capacity to test patient samples.

Every day new drive-through testing sites are being opened to fill the testing capacity the Lighthouse Labs can now provide, with 20 new sites now taking patient samples across the country.

Testing Minister Lord Bethell said:

Our target to reach 100,000 coronavirus tests a day requires a national effort. It is truly humbling to see remarkable experts from across the country use their skills to rapidly scale up testing capacity, with people from all sectors including industry and academia working tirelessly each day.

Today is a milestone moment, as we applaud the staff at Alderley

Park, the country's second mega-lab.

I had the privilege of speaking personally to some of the exceptional staff that made the Lighthouse Lab project possible, but I want to extend my thanks to every single person doing their bit to help the country get through the coronavirus pandemic.

National Testing Coordinator Professor John Newton said:

Every day we take important steps to provide the testing capability the country needs to respond to this pandemic, as Lighthouse Labs increase their capacity and new drive-through testing sites are set up.

The Lighthouse Labs will be the biggest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history. In unprecedented times, remarkable people across the country are achieving unprecedented things. Alderley Park will help to rapidly scale up testing thanks to its team of highly skilled staff working tirelessly around the clock.

Earlier this month the Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced the UK government's 5-pillar plan to rapidly scale up coronavirus testing across the UK.

The new 5-pillar plan outlines the ambitions to:

- Pillar 1: scale up swab testing in PHE labs and NHS hospitals for those with a medical need and the most critical workers to 25,000 a day in England by mid to late April, with the aligned testing strategies of the NHS in the devolved administrations benefiting from PHE's partnership with Roche through a central UK allocation mechanism
- Pillar 2: deliver increased commercial swab testing for critical key workers in the NHS across the UK, before then expanding to key workers in other sectors
- Pillar 3: develop blood testing to help know if people across the UK have the right antibodies and so have high levels of immunity to coronavirus
- Pillar 4: conduct UK-wide surveillance testing to learn more about the spread of the disease and help develop new tests and treatments
- Pillar 5: create a new national effort for testing, to build a mass testing capacity for the UK at a completely new scale

The new Lighthouse Labs have been created through a partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care and Medicines Discovery Catapult with UK Biocentre and the University of Glasgow.

They are being closely supported by both NHS and Public Health England. The Alderley Park facility is hosted by the Medicines Discovery Catapult, working closely with AstraZeneca.