



Department of Health & Social Care

From the Lord Bethell
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation (Lords)

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU
Tel: 020 7210 4850

Julia Lopez MP
By email to: Julia.Lopez.mp@parliament.uk

12 February 2021

Dear Julia,

NHS Test and Trace in your constituency

I am writing to update you on the provision of coronavirus testing in Hornchurch and Upminster and the surrounding areas.

Free and accessible testing is a cornerstone of the NHS Test and Trace service which brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management. This helps prevent the spread of the virus, protect local communities and save lives. The NHS Test and Trace service have processed more than 77 million coronavirus tests since the pandemic began¹. Additionally, the service has contacted and identified over 5.7 million people as recent close contacts² since the service began on 28 May 2020. This helps us get back to the things we love and enables people to see more of their friends and family, get businesses back on their feet and people in jobs.

I wanted to write to you to confirm that we are opening a Regional Test Site (RTS) in your neighbouring constituency of Dagenham and Rainham at Selinas Lane (RM8 1QH), over the coming days. The site is a drive-through site and will offer both assisted and self-administered tests.

Before selecting this site, we have engaged with local government and public health stakeholders to narrow down the location and identify a suitable site. In order to reach a decision, we have considered which site is most suitable for best supporting communities in Dagenham and Rainham, as well as the surrounding areas.

This site is part of a network of RTS across the UK and is in addition to home tests which can be booked through the government's online portal. Mobile Testing Units are also travelling the UK, responding to increased regional demand for testing, and supporting hard

¹ <https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/details/testing> (Virus tests processed)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports> (first link, data tables, table 14)

to reach areas and we are expanding the network of ‘walk-through’ Local Test Sites which are easily accessible by foot or by bicycle.

This expansion of testing supports the existing NHS and Public Health England (PHE) infrastructure, which has greatly increased its testing capacity since the coronavirus pandemic began, supporting our commitment to expand local direction of national testing resources and move to a more locally owned and delivered testing model.

Across the UK, testing capacity has been expanded to more than 700,000 tests a day³. Anyone experiencing a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste, should book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus, by calling 119, or using the NHS Covid-19 app.

In England, anyone testing positive for the virus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help them track their contacts. This will help people to identify who they may have been in close contact with, protecting others from further transmission.

If you choose to share this letter publicly, we would be grateful if you could wait until the 13th of February when the site is expected to be open to the public.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact the team at
NTPHub@dhsc.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,



LORD BETHELL

³ <https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/details/testing> (Virus tests processed)