

Local context

Covid-19 testing

The current challenges around Covid-19 testing within the community (pillar 2) have been widely reported in the media. This is a national issue, largely caused by insufficient capacity within labs and increased public demand for tests. The immediate health and economic impacts on Hampshire are recognised by the County Council and its partners, who are taking action to mitigate where possible.

There are currently two reasons for testing - to ascertain whether somebody currently has Covid-19 (antigen test) and to see whether someone has had Covid-19 in the past (antibody test).

Tests are carried out through the following routes:

- pillar 1: swab testing in Public Health England (PHE) labs and NHS hospitals for those with a clinical need, and health and care workers
- pillar 2: swab testing for the wider population, as set out in government guidance
- pillar 3: serology testing to show if people have antibodies from having had COVID-19
- pillar 4: blood and swab testing for national surveillance supported by PHE, the Office for National Statistics, and research, academic, and scientific partners

Roles and responsibilities: Covid-19 testing is controlled by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). DHSC commission four contractors across England to work with local authorities to arrange local testing provision. Hampshire County Council is responsible for sourcing and scheduling the locations of both Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) and Local Testing Sites (LTS) locations across the area. The locations of the MTUs rotate depending on need - there are always three MTUs in operation across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (HIOW LRF) area, plus one in reserve. The County Council is not responsible for providing testing on site, this is carried out by the contractors.

The County Council continues to prioritise and support testing provision with partners and manage demand for testing among residents. There are several key messages and pieces of useful advice that the County Council continues to promote to residents, including:

When to get a test

- Only book a test if you have one of the [three main symptoms](#) of the virus or are advised to do so
- Do not book a test if you have returned from a quarantined country unless you have symptoms

How to get a test

- Book [online](#) or by calling 119 from 8am. Do not call NHS 111 as this is for other health and medical issues
- When booking online, make sure you complete the form in full. This includes confirming that you have read and agreed to the terms and conditions. You will then be sent a QR code which is required to enter the testing site

What to do if you are having difficulty booking a test site near you

- Keep trying – more tests are made available throughout the day
- If you are offered a test a long distance from home (up to 75 miles), and you are not able to travel via private transport, consider continuing to self-isolate at home until a test more local to you becomes available

The County Council [issued](#) a press release on testing for Covid-19 yesterday (17 September).



School attendance

Data shows that attendance at Hampshire schools is exceptionally good, and above the national average, despite the fears relating to Covid-19. This week (ending 18 September) saw: 91% of primary aged children attending Hampshire schools compared to 86% nationally; and 92% of secondary aged pupils compared to 88% nationally. Many absences are explained by the need to continue shielding because a pupil has a serious medical condition or the more usual childhood illnesses.

COVID ZERO campaign

University Hospital Southampton (UHS) has received praise from the Health Minister, Nadine Dorries, for their COVID ZERO campaign which aims to protect hospitals from the spread of Covid-19.

The Health Minister and the national director of patient safety paid a virtual visit to the Trust to learn more about the COVID ZERO campaign on World Patient Safety Day. To mark the national awareness day, UHS held a virtual launch for their new patient safety strategy. More information available on the [UHS website](#).

National context

Communities

Guidance for those leading a nomadic way of life

The Government has [published](#) new Covid-19 guidance for those leading a nomadic way of life. The guidance outlines that if people lack access to facilities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal they should contact their local authority for assistance.

Measures introduced in the North East

The Government has [announced](#) that following discussions with local leaders, the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre and the Chief Medical Officer for England have agreed to escalate parts of the North East (Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and County Durham) to areas of national intervention.

Children and education

Further Education

The Department for Education (DfE) has [updated](#) the guidance for Further Education providers with new information on reporting actual or suspected Covid-19 cases through the education setting status form.

Autumn exams

The DfE has [updated](#) the guidance on autumn exams with added information on the public health arrangements.

Adults' social care and public health

Emergency departments

DHSC has [announced](#) that emergency departments in 25 hospitals across England will receive an additional £150 million to expand and upgrade, ensuring they have the physical space to treat patients, manage patient flow and improve infection control.

Social care winter plan

DHSC has [confirmed](#) that a new adult social care winter plan will support care homes through winter and aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in care settings.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care [delivered](#) a statement on Covid-19 and in particular the Government's plans to manage infection rates this winter.

Infection Control Fund

DHSC has [announced](#) that the Infection Control Fund has been extended until March 2021, with an additional £546 million to help the care sector restrict the movement of staff between care homes to stop the spread of Covid-19 throughout the winter.

New Lighthouse Labs

Two new Lighthouse Labs in Newcastle and Bracknell have been [announced](#) by DHSC, following previous announcements of others in Newport and Charnwood. This aims to scale testing capacity to deliver 500,000 tests per day by the end of October.

Economy and business

Kickstart Scheme

The Department for Work and Pensions has [confirmed](#) that over 500 bodies have signed up to serve as gateways on the £2bn Kickstart Scheme, providing assistance to employers offering fewer than 30 vacancies under the scheme.

HMRC statistics on support schemes

HMRC has [released](#) new data on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and the VAT payments deferral scheme.

Environment, transport and travel

International travel

Guadeloupe and Slovenia are no longer on the [travel advice exemptions list](#), following the latest assessment of Covid-19 risks. The FCDO advises against all non-essential travel to these countries. Singapore and Thailand, will be added to the list of countries where self-isolation on return the UK is not required.

National Covid-19 data

As of 4pm on 18 September, the total number of lab-confirmed cases was **385,936**. The daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **4,322**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **41,732**, with **27** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **1.1-1.4** and the growth rate range is **+2% to +7%** per day as of 18 September.

Additional links

- Hampshire County Council webpages on coronavirus (including links to press releases): <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus>
- Latest information on coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- NHS information on coronavirus: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

- FAQ from the Cabinet Office:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>
- PPE guidance hub: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>
- Guidance for local government:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government>
- County Councils Network (CCN) coronavirus information pages:
<https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/coronavirus-information-for-local-authorities/>
- Local Government Association (LGA) councillor guidance: <https://www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-outbreak-councillor-guidance>

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