

Coronavirus – New walk through testing centre open now at Usher Hall

A new walk-through coronavirus testing centre has opened in Edinburgh. The new facility is being provided by the UK Government as part of a UK-wide drive to continue to improve the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities.

The centre, in the Usher Hall, will offer pre-booked tests for those with coronavirus symptoms.

The new site is situated so that it is easily accessible without a car. Those being tested will be required to follow public health measures, including social distancing, not travelling by taxi or public transport, practising good personal hygiene and wearing a face covering throughout, including while travelling to and from the testing centre.

Anyone attending an appointment at a walk-through testing will be provided with guidance on getting to and from the test site safely, with additional support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities. Testing at the new site will start this afternoon with appointments made available every day.

The UK Government has provided the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities ever, which now comprises 75 drive-through sites, 112 walk-through sites, 258 mobile units, home testing and satellite kits and a network of Lighthouse laboratories.

Testing is available only for those with coronavirus symptoms – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. Anyone with one or more of these symptoms should book a test at nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling 0800 028 2816.

Anyone testing positive for the virus will be contacted by contact tracers to help them trace their own contacts. This will help people to identify who they may have been in close contact with, protecting others from further transmission.

Close contacts of those testing positive will also hear from contact tracers, asking them to stay at home for 14 days to prevent them from unknowingly spreading the virus. They will be advised to also book a test if they develop symptoms.

The Scottish Government also encourages everyone to sign up to the [Protect Scotland app](#).

UK Government minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said: “The UK Government is committed to helping all parts of the UK fight coronavirus. We are providing the bulk of covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre in Edinburgh comes on top of nine other testing sites across Scotland funded by the UK Government, as well as the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab.

“Testing will play a vital part over the coming months, helping to manage local outbreaks and protect livelihoods. This walk-through centre will help people in Edinburgh have easy access to a test in the city centre.

“We are pleased to be working with commercial partners and

with Edinburgh's iconic Usher Hall. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people and I would like to thank everyone involved for their incredible efforts."

The testing centre is being operated in partnership with Mitie and will self-administered tests.

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman has welcomed the opening of a walk through testing centre at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh.

Ms Freeman said: "Containing and suppressing Covid-19 relies on testing being accessible to everyone. This walk through testing centre in Edinburgh builds on the sites already in place in St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen and will further increase testing capacity ahead of potential spikes as we move into winter.

"Sites like this one can be operational in a matter of days, and we are working at pace with the UK Government, NHS National Services Scotland and local authorities to roll out more across the country so that more people have access to local testing.

"We will continue to adapt our testing strategy in line with the different stages of the pandemic. However, testing is only one effective intervention that we are using to manage the virus and it remains vital that people continue to follow physical distancing advice and practise good hand and cough hygiene not just for their own safety but in order to protect others."