

Coronavirus – new walk-in testing centre opens in Leith

Edinburgh's newest Covid-19 testing centre opens in Leith today as part of the UK Government's drive to make testing more accessible to local people.

The building which is also home to the Registrar's Office, will provide an additional and safe centre for anyone showing symptoms. Residents living close to the venue will be able to pre-book a test from Saturday 7 November 2020 by visiting www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling 0800 028 2816.

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 test site will be provided with guidance on getting to and from the test site safely, with additional support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities.

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This will be the third City of Edinburgh Council building to operate as a test centre with Usher Hall and Gate 55 Community

Hub in Wester Hailes already in place. There is a drive through testing centre at Edinburgh Airport.

The site is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history which has the capacity to process more than 500,000 tests a day. In Scotland, this comprises of six drive-through sites, 12 walk-through sites, 21 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all Covid testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two-thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said: "The UK Government is helping all parts of the UK fight the coronavirus pandemic and this new walk-through testing centre in Edinburgh will make it easier for people to get tested.

"Testing is vital, helping to manage local outbreaks and protecting people's livelihoods. The UK Government is providing the bulk of Covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre is just the latest in our extensive testing network.

"We are pleased to be working with local and commercial partners. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people and I would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work to get this testing centre up and running."

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said: "Containing and suppressing this virus relies on testing being accessible to everyone. The walk through testing centre in Leith is the 12th site across Scotland and will further increase our testing capacity ahead of potential spikes as we move through winter." Centres like this can be operational in a matter of days, and we are working at pace with 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."

Adam McVey, Council Leader, said: "Our top priority is keeping Edinburgh's residents safe and the best way to do that is by encouraging people to follow the latest guidance and get tested if they have any Covid-19 symptoms."

"Our two other sites in the city centre and west Edinburgh have been helping hundreds of people every week to get tested so it's really welcome that we now have a third site open in the north of the city. We'll keep the use of Leith Library under review and if we're in a position to safely reopen the library in the New Year we'll work with the government to find alternatives."

Cammy Day, Depute Leader, said: "It's important we play our part by providing the government with buildings to carry out the testing which has been going really well. We now have three centres open in different parts of the city and I urge anyone with symptoms to follow the guidance and make sure they get checked out."

The Leith Library testing site is open now between 8am and 8pm and can be found at 28 – 30 Ferry Road. 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 who tests positive will be contacted by contact tracers

to help people to identify who they may have been in close contact with and protect 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.

- Tests must be booked in advance at: www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling 0800 028 2816.
- People should only book a test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) or have been told to seek a test by a clinician or an NHS tracer.
- People travelling to and from the test centre must NOT use taxis or public transport.
- People should wear a face covering while travelling to and from the test centre, and while in the centre.
- Tests in this centre are self-administered. This involves taking a swab of the nose and the back of the throat. The process is simple, only takes a few minutes, and full instructions are provided. Staff are on hand to provide additional support for vulnerable people and those with disabilities.
- The centre will operate seven days a week, with appointments available from 8am to 8pm.
- Anyone testing positive will be contacted by NHS Scotland contact tracers. They will help them identify those they have been in 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.