



Department of Health & Social Care

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

*39 Victoria Street
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Tel: 020 7210 4850*

Meg Hillier MP
By email to: meghilliermp@parliament.uk

1 September 2020

Dear Meg,

NHS Test and Trace in your constituency

I am writing to update you on the provision of Coronavirus testing in Hackney South and Shoreditch.

Free and accessible testing is a cornerstone of the new NHS Test and Trace service, which is working to stop the spread of coronavirus in local communities and to support the lifting of restrictions so people can see more of their friends and family, help businesses get back on their feet and get people back in jobs. The NHS Test and Trace service have processed more than 16 million coronavirus tests since the pandemic began¹ and contacted and identified 246,262 people as recent close contacts² since the service began on 28 May 2020.

I wanted to write to you to confirm that we are opening a Local Test Site in your constituency at Bentley Road Car Park over the coming days. I hope this site will make it easier for many people in Hackney to access testing. We have worked with clinical advisors and Public Health England to ensure robust governance for the trial.

This site forms part of a pilot to open new 'walk through' Local Test Sites in England which are easily accessible by foot or on a bike. This site complements the regional drive through testing network across the UK and home testing which can both be booked through the government's online portal. In addition, mobile testing units are also travelling the UK, responding to increased regional demand for testing, and supporting hard to reach areas.

Before selecting this site, we have engaged with local stakeholders to narrow down the location and identify a suitable site. This includes the local authority and NHS

¹ <https://coronavirus-staging.data.gov.uk/testing>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports> (first link, data tables, table 11)

stakeholders. In order to reach a decision, we have considered which site is most suitable for safely testing as many people as possible and how long it is available for.

This expansion of testing supports the existing NHS and Public Health England infrastructure, which has more than doubled 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 300,000 tests a day, meaning that anyone with symptoms can immediately book a test for free. Local authorities in England will have greater autonomy to deliver different types of testing models which are suited to the needs of their population and local communities.

Anyone with symptoms of coronavirus – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – should book a test immediately at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119.

In England, anyone testing positive will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, to help them trace their recent contacts and further control the spread of the virus.

If you choose to share this letter publicly, we would be grateful if you could wait until the 2nd September when the site will be opened to the public.

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

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bethell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

LORD BETHELL