

Date: 1 February 2021



Dear Resident

IMPORTANT INFORMATION COVID-19 variant identified in Woking

The Surrey Local Resilience Forum (SLRF) is working with Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care to carry out a localised testing programme in your area of Woking.

This follows notification that a specific variant of COVID-19 has been identified from two positive tests in the area. The variant is known as the SARS-CoV-2 variant, which originated in South Africa.

Known contacts of the cases have been traced and informed already, but this localised testing programme will enable us to closely monitor any community spread of the new variant, and restrict further transmission.

Thank you for your cooperation. Together, we can keep Surrey safe.

What do you need to do?

- You do not need to travel to a testing site or book a test.
- The test is **free**, you will not be asked to pay or provide any financial information.
- You will be provided with instructions on how to register, carry out and repackage your test. You will need to test yourself and all others aged 18 or over in your household.
- The testing team will not be able to complete the testing for you and they will not need to enter your household.
- The testing team will leave enough kits for everyone in your household to complete the tests and will return later to collect the completed kits. Your sample will be taken to a laboratory so that we can test for the variant.
- If a member of your household has been unable to complete the test when the testing team visits to collect it, please inform the team.

Do the guidelines change as a result of this?

Residents in the selected area do not need to self-isolate unless they have symptoms, have tested positive and/or been in contact with someone who has tested positive and been contacted by Test and Trace.

The best way to control this virus is the same, whatever the variant. It will not spread if we avoid close contact with others. Wash your hands, wear a face covering, keep your distance from others, and reduce your social contacts.

PTO

surreycc.gov.uk



Ruth Hutchinson, Surrey Director of Public Health
(on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care)

The Surrey Local Resilience Forum has been working on the COVID response for Surrey since March 2020 and is made up of local partners including Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, District & Borough Councils, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, local health services, volunteer organisations and others.

Answers to some questions you may have.

- **How many cases of the SARS-CoV-2 variant VOC202012/02 have been detected in the UK?**

As of 30 January 2021, 105 genomically confirmed cases of the SARS-CoV-2 variant which originated in South Africa (called VOC202012/02 in the UK,) have been identified in the UK.

- **What is being done to detect the variant?**

Laboratory work has begun on the VOC 202012/02 in the UK and is routinely undertaken on all variants under investigation or of concern once samples are available.

- **What further information can you provide us about the cases?**

The identity of the cases is confidential, and we cannot provide any further information.

- **What can I do to prevent further spread?**

The best way to stop the spread of the virus is to wash your hands, wear a face covering and keep your distance from others. Whilst in lockdown, it is important that we also stay at home unless it is absolutely essential to go out.

- **What is a PCR test?**

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample. The sample is tested in a laboratory.

- **I have recently had a PCR/LFD test, do I need another?**

Yes, because this sample is specifically being genome sequenced for the variant.

- **How will I receive my results?**

You'll usually get a text or email with your result when it's ready. Most people get their result the next day, but it may take up to 3 days.

- **What should I do if I develop symptoms after the test?**

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (a high temperature, a new and persistent cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste), however mild, you should self-isolate for at least 10 days from when your symptoms started.

You should also get a test straight away through the NHS Test and Trace Service by calling 119 or visiting www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test .

Once you have received your test result, you should follow the guidance on test results.

- **I am an essential worker, can I go to work whilst awaiting my results?**

Yes. However, if you develop symptoms you must self-isolate.

- **Why are you only testing people aged over 18?**

We are testing as many people as possible over the age of 18 in the local area at this stage. This testing is offered over and above the existing testing strategy and will help us decide if further testing is needed.

- **Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

You can call the Surrey Community Helpline 0300 200 1008 Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm, weekends 11am to 3pm. SMS: 0786 0053 465 for Deaf and hearing impaired residents only (Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm).