

# Enhanced Testing in Bolton

## Frequently Asked Questions

May 2021

### Why are you introducing enhanced testing?

Enhanced Covid-19 testing will be rolled out in parts of Bolton to stop the rising infection rates of Covid-19 and, to understand where our variants of concern are.

To help us reduce the spread of the virus, and to understand where the variants are it is important that everyone living or working in the area takes a PCR Covid test. PCR stands for 'polymerase chain reaction', and through this, the test is sent to a laboratory to get the results.

Enhanced testing by using the PCR test is for people who do not have any symptoms of Covid-19. We use a PCR test because it not only checks for Coronavirus (Covid-19), but it can also be sent to a lab for specific genome sequencing to identify any new variants.

If you do the lateral flow device (LFD) testing, then do continue with this, and do a PCR test too. It is really important that we have the laboratory results.

### Why is this form of testing a good thing?

PCR testing not only helps to identify someone who is positive, it helps us monitor any new strains and identify any new patterns in virus behaviour.

### What does it mean when a virus changes or mutates?

All viruses can change over time and usually those changes are small and make little difference. Sometimes the virus can change (mutate) in a way that allows it to spread more quickly or makes it resistant to interventions.

The virus can also change, and that's why we have experts constantly researching its behaviour, so that any changes can be identified and dealt with quickly.

### What do we know about the new variants?

There is no evidence these variants cause more severe illness. There is some evidence that the Indian variant spreads more easily than other Covid-19 variants, so it is the one that we want to stop and contain.

### Should I take the vaccine with the new variants?

Yes. It is important that we all take the vaccine when offered.

Having the vaccine is an important way to stop the spread of Covid-19. Have your vaccine when offered.

Public Health England (PHE) and partners closely monitor the spread of variants in the UK, rapidly investigating variant mutations in the lab to determine their characteristics. They are continuing efforts to understand the effect of the variants on vaccine efficiency and there is currently no evidence to suggest that vaccines will be ineffective. If required, future vaccines could be redesigned and tweaked to be a better match to these variants, as is the case for seasonal flu vaccines.

PHE will keep looking at the data and intelligence to help with understanding the performance of vaccines in the real world, as well as in laboratories, but the trial data is very persuasive; these are highly effective vaccines, and we would expect that to translate into what happens in real practice.



## How are we enhanced testing in Bolton?

Enhanced testing is increased PCR testing, which includes extra test sites and also door-to-door PCR testing.

Enhanced testing involves the testing of people who do not have any symptoms of Covid-19.

Therefore, to help us better understand the variants and the way we respond to them, everyone living or working in the affected area is being asked to take part in surge testing.

## How do I get a PCR Test?

Anyone who lives or works in Rumworth, Deane and Great Lever is asked to take a PCR test this week.

Mobile testing units (MTUs) will be offering PCR testing at:

- **Memory Lane Wedding Venue, Gilnow Lane (BL3 5EL)**
- **Makkah Mosque, Grecian Crescent (BL3 6QU)**

The sites are open 10am – 4pm and no booking is required.

You can pick up and drop off a PCR test at:

- **Deane Road Temple (Shree Swaminarayan Mandir), 161 Deane Road (BL3 5AH)**

More testing sites and additional measures to control the spread of the virus will be announced in the coming days. Please keep checking our website for further updates [www.bolton.gov.uk/testing](http://www.bolton.gov.uk/testing)

## Who should get tested?

All residents in the area should get tested even if:

- you have no symptoms of Covid-19
- you have had a vaccination for Covid-19
- you have tested positive for coronavirus previously (but not within the last 90 days by a PCR test).

## Who should not get tested?

- If you have tested positive for Covid-19 with a PCR test within the last 90 days, you do not need to be tested.
- If you already have Covid-19 symptoms you should book a test through the national portal or attend one of the regular PCR sites [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test).

## I've had the Covid-19 vaccine do I still need to have a Covid test?

Yes.

If you've already had the Covid-19 vaccine we are still asking you to have a PCR test.

We know it can take a few weeks to build up immunity to the virus and this is an extra precaution to be on the safe side. It will also help us to understand if and how the virus has spread in the local community.

## What are all of the Covid-19 tests that are available in Bolton?

There are now three test options for all residents:

- Enhanced Community Testing: Testing people who live and/or work in specific areas, which also looks to check for a new variant or strain of Covid-19. This is by PCR test and is sent to the laboratory to get the results.
- For people with Covid-19 symptoms: Book a PCR test via [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test), or by calling 119. PCR is short for polymerase chain reaction – and is a swab test to the back of the throat and nose and results are sent for lab analysis. Results normally come back within 24-48 hours.
- People who do not have Covid-19 symptoms: We are using lateral flow device (LFD) tests for all residents over the age of 11 (Children under 16 need parental consent). These are also swab tests and the results are available within 30 minutes because they do not need to be sent to a lab. This is all part of the ongoing plans for testing at scale. For further information please visit [www.bolton.gov.uk/testing](https://www.bolton.gov.uk/testing).

## What else can we all do to help?

There is still a lot that we can all do to stop the spread of the virus.

By following all of the public health measures: face covering, handwashing, social distancing and fresh air or good ventilation. But also following current lockdown advice.

By still going to health and vaccination appointments, unless self-isolating.

By remembering that we are all in this together.

## What if I have to self-isolate?

Anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 must self-isolate immediately and pass on their contact details to NHS Test and Trace. This is so that we can find out who else may have been in contact with you and stop the spread of the virus. It is important that you do speak to one of our NHS Test and Trace Team members, who will be able to give you more advice.

People who have tested positive for the virus and who have been asked to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace service may qualify for a £500 support payment if they cannot work and face a loss of income.

People who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive may also be eligible.

To apply visit: [www.bolton.gov.uk/benefits/test-trace-payments/1](https://www.bolton.gov.uk/benefits/test-trace-payments/1).

## Should people who have already had Covid-19 get vaccinated?

Yes.

Getting vaccinated is just as important for those who have already had Covid-19 as it is for those who have not. Having the Covid-19 infection may provide temporary immunity in some people but it will not last long and we have seen many people catch Covid-19 twice or more.

## Do I need to continue to follow the rules after I have received the Covid-19 vaccine?

Whilst the evidence is currently mounting that being vaccinated helps prevent spread / transmission we have not got this confirmed yet, so we must take all precautions possible to protect each other –

**Remember hands, face, space and fresh air** even though you have had the vaccine.

## Can I get the vaccine if I am not registered with a GP?

Yes.

You do not need paperwork, GP records or even an NHS number we just need your name and date of birth.

