

5th May 2021

Dear Parents,

Tower Hamlets have asked to us to pass this information on to you.

It is really important that everybody gets a PCR test as soon as possible:

A small number of people in Tower Hamlets have types of Covid-19 called 'variants of concern'. These were first found in Brazil and South Africa.

These variants are called 'variants of concern' because we currently do not know if they spread more easily than the most common type of Covid-19, if they cause more severe disease or if vaccines are fully effective against them.

We are doing extra testing in areas of the borough for a time-limited period to try to:

1. Find as many cases as possible to stop/slow spread
2. Learn more about the variants of concern.

There is currently no evidence that these variants cause more severe illness. Although the risk to the wider community is considered low, as a precaution, Tower Hamlets Council is working in collaboration with PHE and NHS Test and Trace to offer extra testing in targeted areas.

- Please note childcare settings should remain open and pupils/staff should continue to attend as normal (and follow usual advice if they have symptoms of Covid-19).
- For settings not in the target area, we would be grateful for your support in promoting the PCR tests to your staff and families who live in the surge testing area.

If your staff or families live in the following postcodes, we are strongly encouraging everyone over the age of 11 to **get tested, even if they are well or have been vaccinated**. This will help us to control the virus better and get us all back to living our normal lives sooner.

Postcodes:

All of E1 4## and E1 3##

Some of E1 0, E1 1, E1 2, E1 5, E14 7, E2 0, E2 6, E3 4.

[You can check your postcode here](#) and check if you are being asked to get a test.

We are making tests more easily available:

An additional test unit is available at Gouldman House, E1 4HQ from Sunday 2 May, 8:30am to 3pm. The additional test unit will be in place each day.

PCR home testing tests will be available for collection and return at the sites below from 12pm to 6pm:

1. Bethnal Green Gardens, off Cambridge Heath Road, immediately in front of Bethnal Green Library, E2 0HL.
2. Anchor Retail Park, 123 Mile End Rd, Stepney Green, London E1 4UJ, opposite the turning for Stepney Green.
3. Corner of Redmans Road and Stepney Green, north of Stepney Green Park, E1 3NG.
4. Tramshed Community Hub on Digby Street, E2 0LS (behind Albert Jacob House).

Appointments at these test sites can be [booked online](#).

2. Tests can also be booked through the NHS Covid-19 app or by calling 119.
3. **If you have symptoms** you must book a test via the national portal.

After being tested:

- You will receive your test results from NHS Test & Trace
- Whilst awaiting your results, you can carry on with normal activities (provided you and your household remain well)
- If you test POSITIVE, you and your household will need to self-isolate for 10 days
- If you test NEGATIVE, you do not need to isolate

Extra support is available to those who need it

- If you, or anyone in your household tests positive and needs to self-isolate for 10 days there is support available to help with things like food, money and medicine.

- Visit the [council website](#) or, call 020 7364 3030 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

The same national guidance continues to apply in areas where new variants have been identified and education settings can remain open.

Existing testing (using lateral flow tests) will continue in educational settings and parents and other adults in households with children at school or college, who do not have symptoms, can continue to access regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing.

Thank you for playing your part in helping keep our community safe.

Visit [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) to read the latest national guidance.

Visit [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/surgetest](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/surgetest) for information on local surge tests – this will be regularly updated.