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Merton Council

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

10 February 2021

Supplementary agenda

5 COVID 19 impact in Merton Update -

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Overview & Scrutiny Meeting: Enhanced COVID-19 testing in Pollards Hill

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Director of Public Health, Merton Council

February 2021

Agenda Item 5



Enhanced Testing Programme Summary

What is the “South African Variant”?

- Viruses mutate over time leading to emergence of new “variants”
- A variant of the Covid-19 virus emerged in South Africa in late 2019
- This variant doesn’t cause more serious illness but does infect more easily and vaccines may be less effective against it

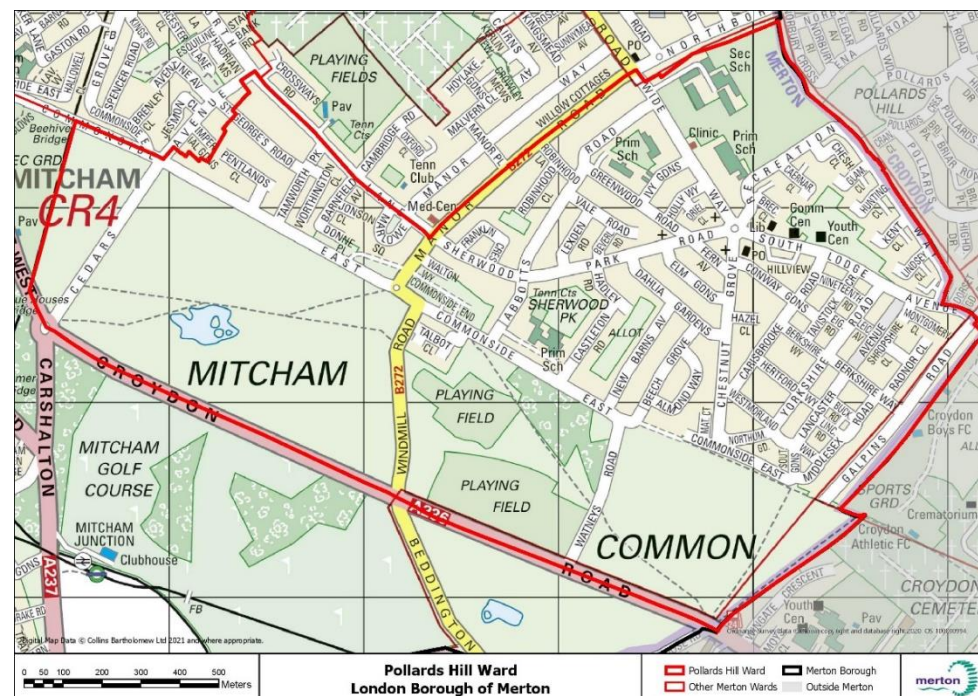
What is the enhanced testing programme?

- Routine analysis of 5% of Covid-19 positive samples found over 100 people with this variant in the UK
- A few of these individuals had no links to South Africa, suggesting transmission of this variant is occurring within communities in the UK
- One such individual was identified in the Pollards Hill area of CR4 in early January 2021
- In response to this, a **two-week enhanced Covid-19 PCR testing programme** is taking place in Pollards Hill, aiming to:
 - **Track** this variant and **understand** whether it is in the community and if so where
 - **Identify** cases and **control** the spread of this variant by asking positive cases and contacts to self-isolate

Who needs to get tested?

Anyone who:

- **Lives or works** in Pollards Hill
- Visits Pollards Hill for **essential activities** such as shopping or to visit a support bubble
- Those on the **border** and not sure or worried will also be tested



Options for testing in Pollards Hill

1. Mobile testing unit at Pollards Hill Library

Address: Pollards Hill Library Car Park, S Lodge Ave, Mitcham CR4 1LT

Opening times: 8am–3pm daily

Book a test [on our website](#) OR call 020 8274 5332



2. New Horizon Centre Testing Site

Address: New Horizon Centre, Mitcham, CR4 1LT

Opening times: 8.30am to 6pm daily

Pick-up and drop-off a home test kit – no booking required



3. Door-to-door Home Testing

- Merton Council volunteers will be visiting every residential address in Pollards Hill
- They will be wearing **hi-vis jackets** with the **Merton Council logo** and **carrying ID**
- Volunteers will hand out home testing kits and will give residents advice on how to do the test
- Completed tests should be dropped off at New Horizon Centre
- Residents who are immobile and cannot seek help to return it, can call 020 8274 5332 between 10am to 5pm to arrange collection.



Progress & Key Messages

Progress (as at 8th February)

Mobile Testing Unit:

- Started on Wednesday 3rd February
- 1,302 tests completed

Home test kits:

- Started on Thursday 4th February
- Door to door - 3,404 kits given out
- New Horizon Centre – 1,848 kits given out
- Total kits given out – 5,252
- Total kits received back – 2392 (43%)

Genomic test results expected in 10-14 days

Key messages for residents:

- If you live, work or visit Pollards Hill for essential activities, you should get a test – **if in doubt, get a test!**
- If you have a test kit already, don't forget to take the test and return it to New Horizons Centre. Residents who are immobile and cannot seek help to return it, can call 020 8274 5332 between 10am to 5pm to arrange collection.
- If you test positive, you and your close contacts, including household members must **isolate for 10 days**
- **National lockdown restrictions** continue to apply – please stay at home as much as possible
- You can still leave home for **essential purposes**, such as shopping for necessities, education and childcare for key workers and vulnerable children and medical appointments **including vaccination**
- Continue to protect yourself and others – remember “**Hands, Face, Space**”
- A range of support is available for people self-isolating in Merton – <https://www.merton.gov.uk/coronavirus/residents>