

**Chief Executive's Office**

Public Health Team  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Princess Buildings  
Princess Street  
HALIFAX  
HX1 1TS

Please Contact: Deborah Harkins  
Telephone 01422 393092

Email: [Deborah.harkins@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.harkins@calderdale.gov.uk)  
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Dear Parent/ Carer

**Extra Covid-19 Testing in Todmorden, Park and Warley, Illingworth and Mixenden, Sowerby Bridge and Ryburn**

I am asking everyone aged 12 and over that lives, works or studies in Todmorden, Park and Warley, Illingworth and Mixenden, Sowerby Bridge and Ryburn wards of Calderdale and/or mixes with people from these areas, to take a PCR test as part of our extra testing programme. To reach as many people as possible, I'm asking all students and their household members at the following schools and college to take a test:

- Todmorden High School
- Halifax Academy
- Calderdale College
- North Halifax Grammar
- Trinity Sixth Form Academy
- Trinity Academy Sowerby Bridge
- Crossley Heath Grammar
- Rishworth School
- Ryburn Valley High School

Each student and staff member will bring home enough tests so that they and those they live with can take the tests at home. Students and staff members will then return the tests to school the following day and they will be sent away to be analysed.



On receipt of your PCR test you will be required to register your details and the unique PCR test barcode number via the GOV.UK website. Instructions on how to do this are included with the PCR test and we've produced a step by step guide to help guide you through the process. You will receive your test result by text or email dependant on the contact details you register. Tests for students, staff members and those they live with, must be returned in the transport pack provided within 24 hours of taking the test, to the school or college you received the test from. Dedicated collection boxes will be on site for the tests to be deposited.

We've produced a video to guide you through the self test and registration process. You can access the video [here](#)

### **Why are we doing extra testing?**

The Covid-19 case rate in Calderdale doubled during May and is still increasing. We need to keep case rates as low as possible to prevent new variants of concern developing and spreading.

We are acting now to try and prevent further spread of Covid-19 across the whole of Calderdale and in the areas where there are high and rising case rates, and particularly in Todmorden, Park and Warley. This will help protect our communities from increasing cases and from new strains of the virus that spread more easily.

We have seen an increase in cases of the Delta variant of concern (first identified in India) across the borough in the last 2 weeks and the numbers are increasing quickly. There is a cluster of cases of the Delta variant in people that live in the Todmorden area.

### **Who should be tested?**

Anyone who lives, works or studies in Todmorden, Park and Warley, Illingworth and Mixenden, Sowerby Bridge and Ryburn and/or mixes with people from these areas should take one of the PCR tests.

### **What about those that don't have children at high school?**

As well as distributing tests through schools, existing testing sites in Todmorden, Halifax and Brighouse will be open for walk up asymptomatic testing with no need to book. In the coming weeks testing will also visit community sites in Todmorden, Park and Warley, Illingworth and Mixenden, Sowerby Bridge and Ryburn with specific sites informed by engagement with local communities.

### **I've had both doses of the vaccine, should I still get the test?**

Everyone should do their bit and get a PCR test even if they are fully vaccinated. This is because people that have had the vaccine can still get the Delta variant of Covid-19, and it's important that they don't pass it on to others.

### **I already do lateral flow tests, should I do a PCR test?**

Even if you do regular lateral flow tests, it's important that you take a PCR test as part of the extra testing. This is because the PCR tests in our extra testing programme are prioritised for genetic sequencing. That means we will be able to find out if the people that test positive have one of the new variants of concern. Lateral flow tests can't provide this information. If you usually do regular lateral flow tests, why don't you just swap one of them for a PCR test as part of the extra testing? That way you're not doing any more tests than usual.

### **How many PCR tests should I do?**

We are just asking you to do 1 PCR test at any time during the 4 weeks that we are running the extra testing programme.

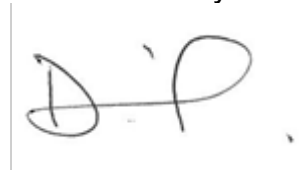
### **What else can we I do to protect myself against new variants?**

- Limit mixing and keep your distance from people you don't live with
- Meet others outside if possible. If you're meeting others indoors make sure there's plenty of fresh air
- Wear a mask when indoors with people you don't live with, e.g. in shops, using public transport
- Isolate at home if you have symptoms or a positive test result
- Get the vaccine when invited

Calderdale's communities have shown real kindness throughout the pandemic, and I'm asking everyone in Todmorden, Park and Warley, Illingworth and Mixenden, Sowerby Bridge and Ryburn and/or those who mix with people from these areas, to step up once again to help the community, by getting just one PCR test in the next few weeks as part of our extra testing programme

Thanks very much for all your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Harkins', written over a thin horizontal line.

**Deborah Harkins**  
Director of Public Health