



Test and Trace

Baroness Dido Harding
NHS Test and Trace
39 Victoria Street
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Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt,
Chair, Health and Social Care Select Committee
(Commons)
House of Commons
London
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Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for inviting me to give evidence last week. Following this, I committed to providing answers on a number of points raised in the session.

Contact Tracing Statistics

NHS Test and Trace published information from the first week of the tracing service on Thursday 11 June¹. This included the number of positive cases that are transferred to the contact tracing system; the number that were contacted and asked to self-isolate; the number of contacts identified; and the number of those that were asked to self-isolate.

The intention is for NHS Test and Trace to publish weekly statistics and provide further information for local authorities and their partners so that they have the information they need to help contain any outbreaks.

In response to your specific questions, for the period 28 May – 03 June:

The proportion of cases contacted by clinician within 24 hours	79% of people were contacted within 24 hours (including online and through call centres)
The proportion of people willing to share close contacts	We do not have a direct figure to answer this question. However, 67% of all positive cases were reached and asked to provide contacts.
The number of close contacts contacted by call centres within 24 hours	85% of people were contacted within 24 hours (including online and through call centres)
The compliance rate with self-isolation	85% of those contacts reached agreed to self-isolate.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-28-may-to-3-june-2020>

Testing Turnaround Times

You also asked for clarification about the timing of test results to be delivered. The Government has built a robust and efficient testing programme at record pace. We now have capacity to deliver 200,000 tests a day.

The speed at which we have set up the testing infrastructure is unprecedented, and a real success made possible by teamwork between the Government, key private companies and others. We know that as well as capacity, speed is also important to promote confidence in the system and enable rapid contact tracing.

Regional Testing Centres and Mobile Testing Units are carrying out thousands of tests daily and the majority of these swab results are returned within 24 hours, and more than 90% are returned within 48 hours. We have plans in place to improve the end to end process further, to ensure people are getting results in 24h from symptom onset wherever possible. We are undertaking a complete review of the home testing service to also improve turnaround times in this channel where possible. We want to ensure that the data we publish is statistically robust. We are working hard to verify our operational management information on turnaround times and are working towards a release as soon as possible.

Contract Tracers from BAME Backgrounds

Lastly, you asked for clarification on the proportion of NHS Test and Trace contact tracers that were from the BAME community. I can share with you that more than 25% of contact tracers working for the programme are from a BAME background.

I hope this letter provides clarity on these matters and elaborates on the evidence I provided during the session on 3 June.

Many thanks and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dido', with a horizontal line underneath.

Baroness Dido Harding

Chair NHS Test and Trace