

LRF

**Northamptonshire
Local Resilience Forum**

**Date: 19.08.2020
For immediate release**

COVID-19 Press Release

Contact:

nccg.urgentresponsecomms@nhs.net

Northamptonshire's Public Health team to start local Contact Tracing this week

Northamptonshire County Council's Public Health team are set to be amongst the first areas in the country to take on local contact tracing responsibilities when it launches today (Wednesday 19th August).

Luton, Leicester and Blackburn are already successfully carrying out local contact tracing measures and Northamptonshire proactively sought to take on this responsibility in response to a recent increase in cases to ensure as many COVID-19 cases are followed up as possible.

At the moment, most contact tracing is carried out by the national NHS Test and Trace team, but new arrangements in Northamptonshire mean that if the national team fails to make contact with a positive case after 24 hours, the case will be passed on to the local team to follow up.

Over the last two weeks, the Northamptonshire Public Health team have been asked to meet a number of requirements in order to be approved as a local Test and Trace centre, including but not limited to, ensuring adequate resource is in place, putting in enhanced data sharing agreements, undertaking staff training to the level of the national Test and Trace staff and IT development.

The new arrangement means that if the NHS national Test and Trace team has been unable to contact you within 24 hours, your case will be passed to the Northamptonshire team who will continue to reach out to you.

If you are contacted by the local Track and Trace team, this will be via a text message or a phone call. If the team fails to contact you through these means, a volunteer from the Test and Trace team and or another member of our partner services will be sent to your residence in person to contact you.

You will be asked for the following pieces of information; your name, date of birth and postcode, if you live with other people, any places you've been recently such as a workplace or school, and the names and contact details of any people you were in close contact with in the 48 hours before your symptoms started, or

before your positive test if you have not had symptoms (if you know these details). This information will allow the local public health team to identify the likely cause of infection, to look for patterns in infection rates and to take action where risks are identified.

If you are contacted by Test and Trace services, you will NOT be asked about any bank account information or be asked to give out any kind of password or pin numbers. All information you provide to Northamptonshire County Council Test and Trace service is confidential and will only be shared with partners involved in the follow up process. Anyone who is identified as one of your close contacts in the infectious period will NOT be told your identity.

Lucy Wightman, Director for Public Health for Northamptonshire said "Working with the National Test and Trace programme to provide this local enhanced service offers us a really important opportunity to reach out more proactively to those people testing positive in our community who are not being reached by the national team.

"It is essential if you test positive for COVID-19 that you self-isolate for 10 days, and that anyone identified as a close contact of a positive case self-isolates for 14 days. This is key to breaking the chain of infection and reducing the risk of further people being infected.

"If you are concerned that you might have COVID-19 or you have symptoms, however mild, get tested and self-isolate. It is essential that the public follow the guidance and that everyone acts responsibly in reducing the risk of transmission and protecting those in our communities who are most vulnerable."

Tests can be booked online at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119. Home testing kits can also be ordered subject to availability.

-ends-

Notes to editors

- For more details on test and trace information, visit www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates/testandtrace
- This briefing has been issued on behalf of the Northamptonshire Local Resilience Forum
- Media enquiries should be sent to: nccg.urgentresponsecomms@nhs.net
- If your enquiry is urgent and outside of normal office hours, please contact the above email address in the first instance. You will receive a message with a contact number to call. Alternatively you can contact the Department of Health and Social Care press office at pressofficenewsdesk@dhsc.gov.uk