

Local Outbreak Engagement Board

4 February 2021

COVID-19 Variant - Surge testing

1. Purpose

To provide detail on COVID 19 Surge Testing.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That, subject to any comments that Board Members may wish to make, the report be noted.

3. Report detail

Extensive surveillance of COVID-19 has identified a small number of cases of the COVID-19 variant first discovered in South Africa, in localities across England, including an area in Walsall, which can't be traced back to international travel.

The Council is working closely with Public Health England and the national NHS Track and Trace team to support measures to curb any potential spread of this variant; this will include significantly increasing the testing offer in a targeted and intelligence-led way.

Residents, over the age of 18, who are living or working in parts of the Borough will be strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 test, even if they are not showing symptoms. Testing Units will be deployed offering testing and Walsall Council will also be encouraging people in the area to get tested by providing home test kits.

Testing, in combination with measures such as hands-face-space and lockdown measures, will help to suppress and control the spread of the virus, while enabling a better understanding of the new variant.

4. Conclusion

That enhanced testing is carried out, allowing positive tests to be analysed to identify any further spread of the new variant first discovered in South Africa, enabling a better understanding of the variant and identifying if there are any more cases of this particular strand of the virus in the area.

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