

**Test-Ed COVID-19 Testing Project  
Information for University of Edinburgh staff and student participants**

**Participant Information Sheet: Qualitative Interviews**

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**Introduction**

You previously consented to participate in the University of Edinburgh's COVID-19 Testing Project, TestEd. The overall aim of this project is to introduce an easily accessible and efficient system to provide regular COVID-19 screening in the workplace.

As a TestEd participant, you completed an online survey about your views of the testing process and indicated that you would be willing to be contacted to participate in a follow up interview with a researcher if you tested positive for Covid-19. This Participant Information Sheet includes what you need to know about the interview element of TestEd.

Before deciding whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

**What the Study is about**

The aim of the qualitative interview element of TestEd is to explore in depth the views and experiences of staff and students regarding regular testing and to examine how participants who test positive respond to public health advice. In particular, we are interested in the barriers and facilitators to participating in testing and to the self-isolation element of public health advice. Your views can help identify ways to improve the testing process and information and support provided for staff and students.

**What Will Happen If I Take Part In This Study?**

You will be contacted by email to set up an interview date. We are planning to conduct interviews by telephone or online. This will involve detailed discussion with a member of our research team during a semi-structured interview, where we will ask you about your views and experience of: the testing process; obtaining your test results; advice you were given and gaps in information; any worries or concerns you had when you received your positive test result from TestEd; the process of obtaining a further test to confirm your positive result via NHS Test and Protect, or NHS Occupational Health or other associated body; advice you were given about self-isolation and actions you took following that advice; support needs

and any support provided; other aspects of public health guidance; and whether and to what extent you trusted the testing process and the results.

At the beginning of the interview, we will run through the participant information again and ask you to confirm your consent to participate in the study. We will also ask for your permission to audio record the interview. This is for transcription purposes only. The interview will be structured but informal, and you will be encouraged to talk freely about anything you feel is relevant to the questions. There are no right or wrong answers and all your views will be respected. Anything you tell us in this interview will be confidential and not in any way identifiable to you.

The interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes, and will take place on a date and time of your choosing. If you need to leave and end the interview at any time, please feel free to notify the interviewer and we can arrange to continue with the interview at another time if you wish.

Please take time to read this information carefully. If anything isn't clear, or if you'd like further details, you can email us at [TestEd@ed.ac.uk](mailto:TestEd@ed.ac.uk). You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

### **Who Is Eligible To Participate In This Study?**

Anyone who has taken part in TestEd, completed the voluntary online survey of participants and who has received a positive for Covid-19 via the TestEd project.

### **How can I participate in an interview under Covid-19 restrictions?**

Participating in this study will not require you to leave your home or meet anybody in person.

Owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the government's containment measures, we will be conducting recruitment and interviews for this study remotely. This can be done by telephone or using a secure online teleconferencing platform, such as Microsoft Teams, according to your preference. We will contact you by your preferred method to arrange a call at a time of your convenience, send confirmation of your appointment time and, if applicable, a secure link to an online teleconference call with our interviewer. At the date and time indicated in your appointment confirmation message, you will need to log into the call by following the link, or, if you opt to be interviewed by telephone, you will receive a phone call by our interviewer. If you need to cancel or reschedule your interview for any reason, please let us know as soon as possible by replying to the email to arrange a new time.

Your physical and online safety as a study participant is paramount. We are aware of concerns about fraudulent schemes using the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to target vulnerable people online or by telephone. We will never ask you to provide any sensitive information over the telephone or by email, and under absolutely no circumstances will ask you to divulge private or financial details.

## **How Will My Privacy Be Protected?**

Your data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Law. All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Your data will be referred to by a unique participant number rather than by name. Your data will only be viewed by the research team, but may be shared with research regulators on request for regulation purposes. This will not include any identifiable information about you.

The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed by an independent transcribing company who has signed a privacy agreement with the study investigators. The audio recording from your interview may contain identifiable information, but the audio file name and transcription of the recording will not have your name attached to them. Your name and details will not be recorded in the notes written during the interview, in the transcription of the audio recording, or in reports from the study and your identity will remain private and confidential in all outputs. Reports about this study may quote some of the words you use in the interview, however you will not be identifiable from this information.

## **Are There Any Benefits or Disadvantages In Taking Part?**

There are no direct benefits but we hope that the information gained from the interviews will improve our understanding of how university testing for COVID-19 can be implemented, how staff and student experience of testing can be improved, and our understanding of how people think about and experience public health advice including advice on self-isolation following a positive test result.

We do not expect that you will experience any harm by taking part in this research. Some of the questions asked in the interview may be sensitive and you may feel uncomfortable discussing them. You can pause or end the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable. The interviewer will entirely respect your wishes and will not pressure you into continuing the interview or answering any questions you do not wish. The interview will also take around 30-40 minutes of your time but it will be scheduled for a time that suits you.

## **Can I Request That I Be Withdrawn From The Study At Any Point?**

Yes, you can withdraw from the study at any time and do not have to give a reason for doing so. If you decide to do this after the interview has been completed, please inform the study team via [TestEd@ed.ac.uk](mailto:TestEd@ed.ac.uk). Once you have notified us that you wish to withdraw from the study we will no longer use your interview data and your interview transcript and audio recording will be destroyed.

## **What If I Have Any Problems Or Would Like Further Information About the Study?**

If you would like more information about the study you can request this by emailing the dedicated TestEd mailbox. [TestEd@ed.ac.uk](mailto:TestEd@ed.ac.uk)

If you would like to discuss this study with someone independent of the study team please contact ([Professor Margaret Frame, Director of MRC Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine, email address M.Frame@ed.ac.](mailto:M.Frame@ed.ac.uk))

**Thank you for taking time to read this participant information sheet**

## **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Participant Information**

All information collected in this study will be kept on a secure online server in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), along with the UK Data Protection Act. All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer file. Your consent information will be kept separately from your survey responses in order to minimise risk.

### **Message to participants from the TestEd team on behalf of the University:**

We will use information from you in order to develop and to implement TestEd and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. Anonymised data which will be used for research purposes will be stored for a minimum of 5 years after the study has ended. Identifiable audio recordings will also be kept securely for this period of time.

As a publicly-funded organisation, we have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will only use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

This document explains how we will use any data that you share with us. We are legally required to tell you how we will use this information and to give you the opportunity to tell us not to use your information in that way.

**Providing personal data by registering as a participant, by providing regular saliva samples, by completing questionnaires or verbally, in follow-up interviews.**

To participate in the follow up interview element of TestEd you will be asked to carefully read the study information sheet before providing your consent to participate.

The study investigators will keep your name and contact details, as well as the other information you provide, strictly confidential and will not pass this information on to third parties. We will use this information only as needed, to contact you about your test results, to make sure that information relevant to the study is properly recorded, and to ensure the quality of the study.

**What happens to my data?**

Your interview can be conducted over the telephone or using a secure online teleconferencing platform, such as Microsoft Teams, according to your preference. In both instances, an audio recording of the interview will be taken using an encrypted digital recorder. The audio file will be saved on our secure online server and deleted from any recording devices as soon as possible. Your name will not be attached to the audio file.

### 1. Transcription

The file will be transferred to First Secretarial, a transcribing company, who has signed a data agreement with the study investigators in order to produce a transcript of your interview. The transcript of your interview will be saved on our online server and will contain no identifying information about you.

### 2. Analysis

Your anonymised interview data, in the form of a transcript, will be imported into qualitative data analysis software where it will be combined with others for analysis by the same research team. The audio file and transcript from your interview will be retained on our server for a minimum of 5 years after the end of the study.

### 3. Publication

The anonymised results of TestEd will be analysed for research purposes and may be quoted in the reports and academic publications we write. Your name will never be used in any of these reports or publications and they will not include any personal identifiable information about you. When we publish our findings, we will upload all of the anonymised data and transcripts to an online repository. When using research repositories, researchers are often required to upload their supporting or underlying data. The repositories have technical controls in place to ensure that only authorised individuals can access the information.

Certain individuals from the University of Edinburgh and regulatory organisations may examine our research records to check the accuracy of the research study. They will only be able to access pseudonymised and unlinked information.

## Contact for further information

You can find out more about how we use your information and our legal basis for doing so in our Privacy Notice at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/data-protection/privacy-notice-research>

For further information on the use of personal data by the University of Edinburgh, please go to website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/privacy-notice-research>

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not



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satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Data Protection Officer contact information:

**University of Edinburgh**

Data Protection Officer  
Governance and Strategic Planning  
University of Edinburgh  
Old College  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9YL  
Tel: 0131 651 4114  
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