

Survey Results for Participants

Staff and student views and experiences of the TestEd programme

Introduction

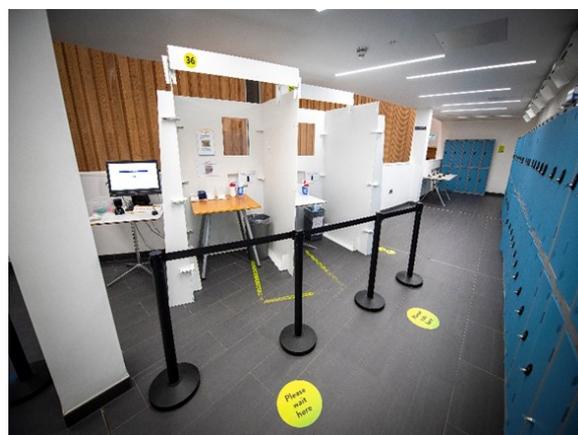
The TestEd research project at the University of Edinburgh has been running for almost a year. In Apr-21 many of you completed an online survey about your experience of TestEd and some of you also took part in an interview with a researcher. We would like to take this opportunity to feed back to you the results from the survey and interviews. We hope you find it interesting.

What was the purpose of the TestEd survey and interviews?

The survey and interviews that took place earlier this year explored staff and students' views and experiences of regular testing, post-test attitudes and behaviour towards public health advice, and asked about ways to improve the TestEd programme. Gathering this information provided an understanding of the impact of the programme and the factors that could benefit participants and the wider population in future rounds of testing.

How many people took part?

- 760 participants that provided one or more TestEd samples were asked to fill in the survey
- 522 (69%) participants completed the survey
- Survey participants had been enrolled in TestEd for an average of about 2 months
- 74% of respondents were staff members and 63% were female
- 18 interviews carried out to date with participants who tested positive



Survey findings & some early themes emerging from interviews

- TestEd was easy to find out about and only a tiny number of participants reported any problems identifying a sample collection site
- Providing a sample was quick and took less than 5 minutes for 88% of participants to do this
- Perceived convenience of accessing sample collection sites depended on participants' role at the university
- 7% of participants travelled specifically to campus to provide a sample despite programme guidance to avoid doing so
- Some participants used TestEd while experiencing 'symptoms' although not necessarily nationally recognised COVID symptoms
- There was a high level of trust and confidence in the programme
- Almost all (99%) rated their experience of TestEd as 'excellent' or 'good'
- 90% believed their result(s) were accurate and felt reassured to work/study safely on campus
- Some participants used lateral flow device (LFD) tests (at home, in other workplaces) to 'cross check' their TestEd result
- Survey respondents reported high compliance with public health guidelines with little indication of any relaxation of this amongst those testing negative
- Satisfaction with the support provided by the university to help apply public health guidance following a test result was primarily positive

Results for Participants

Staff and student views and experiences of the TestEd programme

- Food vouchers to assist with self-isolation for those testing positive were well received
- Participants highlighted the following areas of the programme that could be improved: provision of booths for privacy at all test sites, easier access to test results, technical hitches/delays with processing results, more information on how TestEd compared to other testing approaches in terms of sensitivity and specificity of the lab test, and routinely available information on number of positive tests returned via the programme

How have these findings been used to improve TestEd so far?

- Booths for privacy provided at all sites
- Clearer information and map showing sample collection sites listed on TestEd website
- Weekly testing results including the number of positive tests returned via the programme available on TestEd website

How have these findings contributed to research in the area?

- Survey results and preliminary interview findings reported to the university and the Scottish Government
- The lack of discomfort of saliva sampling and perceived higher accuracy of TestEd PCR tests provides added value versus LFD tests
- TestEd contributes to a demand for routine asymptomatic testing in ways that neither symptomatic NHS PCR testing, nor home-based LFD testing can do
- Results highlighted a lack of clarity in current national guidelines on when to seek out a test, and what counts as a COVID symptom
- Plural testing strategies do not undermine the value that participants place on TestEd in terms of commitment to the programme nor intention to continue with testing

- Concerns that access to regular testing might result in 'risk taking' behaviour when testing negative were not realised

Next Steps

- Data will be analysed from second online survey of 4500 TestEd participants circulated in Nov-21
- Further interviews and second follow-up interviews with participants who tested positive will be carried out thus allowing views to be examined over time
- Some participants who repeatedly test negative will also be invited to take part in interviews to find out more about the experiences and behaviours of those who continue to engage with the programme but who haven't needed to self-isolate
- Attitudes to regular asymptomatic testing and its relationship with vaccination will be explored
- The aim in the longer term is to contribute to the literature on asymptomatic testing programmes through the preparation of manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed journals

How can I find out more?

The first place to go is the website for TestEd: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/tested-covid>

On the website you can find information about the TestEd programme including news items, weekly testing results and study related publications. You will also find this summary of the survey findings [Link] as well as the full survey report https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tested_survey_round_1_report_100921.pdf

Thank you!

Finally, the research team would like to say a HUGE thanks to all students and staff who participated in the survey and interviews