Dear Colleague,

The Department for Health (DH) is running a programme to roll out drive-through COVID-19 sampling sites across the country, to be used by NHS staff and latterly key workers. Having launched three sites in London and a small number in major cities across the country last week, the programme is looking to scale to 40-50 sites nationally by the end of April.

The requirements for the site are attached, along with an example of the layout of the first pilot site in Nottingham. To date, sites that have been targeted have been very large and easily accessible in major locations. As the number of locations increases, site requirements are likely to need to be more flexible. The most suitable sites will ideally be 3-5 acres in size (a football pitch is about 1.5 acres) and able to be handed over for sole use for the purpose of the site; with any continued use by the owner to be kept separate.
There is a hypothesis that Universities are likely to have suitable sites to contribute to the programme. All that is required is the site itself; a large car park that could be “leased” to the government for a period of time (ideally into the late summer, prior to the Autumn term commencing); all power, facilities and staffing will be provided by the government and their partners and suppliers.

As you can imagine, the programme is moving quickly. The team supporting the DH would like to identify sites and progress discussions with us on the possible use of specific University sites in the first half of next week. If, based on the short description above and attached information, you think your University may have suitable space to provide, please reach out to the team noted below.

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