

# Atif's story



Atif is a Locum Optometrist providing routine and acute eye care. Within Atif's current role as an experienced clinician, he is used to talking to patients on a day to day basis. Atif was hugely excited at the opportunity to join NHSP as a Test and Trace Team Clinical Contact Caseworker, to help support the NHS in the fight against COVID-19.

Thank you for all your help during this challenging time – you're truly are an NHS Hero!

## 1. What does your current role involve and Why did you decide to get involved?

As an optometrist I give advice and information to people about their eye health and general wellbeing. I am very used to dealing with anxious patients and regularly reassure and support them through bad news. So, when I read the job description, I instantly knew my skill set fitted perfectly and that I could make a vital contribution to the national effort.

## 2. What is a typical day for you?

I begin the conversation by saying I am calling on behalf of NHS Test and Trace to check how you are getting on. I believe it's important to put people's wellbeing first. I take my time to listen to people to check on how they are coping with their symptoms and isolation, as well as any general worries or concerns they have.

I reassure people that all the information they share with me is held securely in line with data protection and is solely used to protect their family, friends and the wider public. This information is then passed onto my contact tracing colleagues who will call the identified close contacts, check on their well-being and ask them to self-isolate for 14 days to stop further transmission of the virus.

## 3. Tell us about some of your cases and give a brief description or example of what you have had\*.

I have spoken to several elderly patients who have appreciated someone calling them to ask how they are getting on. Often people don't have access to the internet, therefore this calling service is vital in keeping a check on these individuals. One elderly gentleman lived on his own and was very anxious, so I provided him with details of how to contact the Samaritans if his anxiety worsened or he just needed to talk to someone. He said he felt much better after our conversation."

[Also] one person I spoke to was working in a homeless shelter and was routinely tested at work. It was through one of these routine tests that this person tested positive for coronavirus, but they didn't feel unwell or show any symptoms. Through using memory jogging techniques, I unravelled that two weeks before this person tested positive they had experienced a sore throat and had felt unusually unwell for 24 hours. They had continued to work as they did not think they had coronavirus. That meant they had potentially transmitted the virus to work colleagues and the public over the last couple of weeks. I gathered the details of their close contacts and escalated this case to my Tier 1 contact tracing colleagues in Public Health England. This meant quick action could be taken to temporarily close the shelter, disinfect it and help stop further transmission.

## 4. What positive experiences have you had doing the job?

I called a man that had just been discharged from hospital after being treated for coronavirus. He had been moved into temporary housing for his isolation period, due to having vulnerable family members at home. It was clear that the flat was not fit for purpose, therefore I was able to quickly escalate this to the local authority. The person was immediately moved into alternative accommodation. He told me that without NHS Test and Trace, he wouldn't have known how to seek help, he couldn't thank me enough.

## 5. Have you enjoyed being a Test and Trace Team Clinical Contact Caseworker and why?

I am really enjoying the role and feel like I have made a significant difference to many people's lives. NHS Test and Trace is vital to protecting the public from coronavirus. By stopping transmission of the virus, we are saving lives and helping the nation to get back on track.