



HELPING DELIVER THE COVID-19 PROGRAMME

Location: Nationwide

0330 433 1766

www.sunbeltrentals.co.uk/case-studies



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BACKGROUND

In 2020, the world entered a crisis unlike anything seen before. The first official case of COVID-19 recorded in the UK was on 29th January 2020.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the pandemic to be a global emergency and on 23rd March 2020, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19, closing many sectors and ordering the public to stay at home.

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, the Government introduced the Test and Trace programme, followed by the COVID-19 vaccination programme. These were set up at pace, under extraordinary circumstances and were a vital tool to help keep people safe during the pandemic.

CLIENTS

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

DATE

March 2020 - July 2022

PRODUCTS:

1 million products and services across our entire fleet including trakway, fencing, marquees, cabins, TM, heating and Cooling, Power, lighting, Wi-Fi radios, fire extinguisher.



FIRST STAGES OF THE PANDEMIC

When the Prime Minister officially put the UK into lockdown on 23rd March 2020 to try and halt the spread of COVID-19, London was at the epicentre of the virus. On the evening of 25th March 2020, Sunbelt Rentals was asked to provide equipment and expertise to some of the Government's strategic partners, who were tasked with creating two NHS drive-through COVID-19 testing centres in Wembley and Greenwich within just 24 hours.

Sunbelt Rentals' Project Managers co-ordinated these two initial builds from start to finish, orchestrating the smooth delivery of not only traditional rental equipment, but a specialist turnkey solution to provide full compound builds which were secure and fully operational

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Building the Largest Medical Testing Network in British History

Following the success of the build of the first two COVID-19 testing centres, the demand snowballed to support the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), we helped build the largest medical testing network in British history. This ensured that everyone could get tested for COVID-19 and close contacts could be traced quickly and efficiently.

The government's COVID-19 response plan necessitated a huge infrastructure drive - the scale of which had never been encountered before. We helped to create anything from a seven lane to a 17-line drive-through COVID testing site, often making sure they were operational within just 24 hours. Land was made available by 300 local authorities and over 500 private landowners including high profile sites created at locations such as Glasgow Airport, Manchester Etihad Stadium, Birmingham Metropolitan Hospital, Brighton AMEX Stadium and many more.

The solution we provided included the provision of a huge range of equipment including fencing, barriers, accommodation and welfare facilities, marquees, temporary power generation, plant and tools, powered access, safety and communications equipment, lighting, Wi-Fi networks, clinical waste, cold storage facilities, traffic management and control equipment, fire safety products and defibrillators, plus many more. Every single site was different and required a bespoke site solution. The national testing programme opened an average of nine sites per week .

Sunbelt Rentals provided a 'one-stop shop' solution and in cases where we didn't have the equipment in our fleet, we called upon our experienced supply chain network to assist so that we could deliver the whole contract.

Such was the pace of the project that we deployed nearly 300,000 assets in the first six months. We invested over £30 million in innovative equipment with enhanced environmental credentials to protect the health and wellbeing of local residents, improve the air quality and reduce noise in inner city locations. We made huge investment in tower lights utilising solar, battery, hybrid and the latest Tier 5 diesel technology in order to reduce the carbon footprint and minimise disruption.

All in all, we built the infrastructure for over 600 local walk-in and regional drive-through COVID testing sites across the UK. Working with partners, we helped to provide over 55 million COVID tests.

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FULLY MANAGED SOLUTION

Once the COVID testing sites were set up, our involvement didn't stop there. We provided a fully managed 24/7 solution covering waste disposal, chemical waste, bio-waste, welfare, and toilet servicing. Added value services included project management, fuel management, security provision, emergency call outs and breakdown support.

We formed a dedicated COVID-19 support team in our Customer Service Centre that purely dealt with test and trace requests. At its peak, our support team received over 300 calls a day and provided daily financial reporting, consolidated invoicing, telemetry data reporting, query resolution, partner sourcing and contracting expertise.

We worked very closely with the client to devise a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to demonstrate both continuous improvement and value for taxpayers' money. The framework provider for the contract was Crown Commercial Services (CCS), who carried out audits to ensure compliance, invoice accuracy and to ensure that everything was carried out in line with the original agreement.

“In the early days of the pandemic we had to mobilise a nationwide network of test sites very quickly. We built the largest diagnostic network that had ever been built in the UK. We needed partners that could deliver the infrastructure, set it up quickly and safely and stop the spread of the virus.

We peaked at over 500,000 PCR tests a day, plus several million lateral flow tests a day as well, and that was really testament to the hard work and dedication of people working at the UK Health Security Agency but also our partners at Sunbelt Rentals and elsewhere who did a fantastic job rising to the challenge of tackling the greatest pandemic that any of us have ever known”.

Oliver Munn
Chief Operating Officer
Testing, UK Health Security
Agency (UKHSA)

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety were even more critical than ever on this project. The test sites catered mostly for symptomatic people who believed they had COVID, and many of them did, so it was crucial that the sites were designed to prevent the spread of the virus.

Marquees and other naturally ventilated spaces were heavily utilised, and the temporary structures were built to withstand severe weather conditions. We provided welfare facilities and climate control equipment to ensure staff were warm enough in the winter and cool enough in the summer. Bacteria can spread through individuals, equipment, and surfaces, so we implemented a stringent decontamination process to protect our teammates sharing equipment, vehicles, and welfare spaces, as well as our customers, suppliers and the general public.

DEMOBILISATION

Due to the success of the vaccine rollout, the UK Health Security Agency was able to scale back COVID testing in 2022 which meant demobilising the huge network of test sites. It was originally estimated that it would take six months or more to complete the demobilisation programme, but thanks to Sunbelt Rentals and other partners, the timelines were compressed significantly.

The whole operation was demobilised within just four months - between April and July 2022 - several months ahead of schedule and well under budget.

As the original schedule was accelerated, this resulted in huge financial savings to the taxpayer and this money has now been redirected towards other pressing health needs.

TEAMWORK

One of the critical elements of this contract was Sunbelt Rentals' ability to work together as one team across all business units and departments. Right at the beginning of the pandemic, people were scared to leave their homes and our team members went into communities to reassure the public and help make them feel safe.

Our people carried on working throughout the pandemic. Many of our operational colleagues stayed in hotels with the Emergency Services and we were officially declared an 'Essential Services' provider. Regardless of whether individuals were the Chief Executive, part of the depot network or the supporting infrastructure, every single colleague had an important role to fulfil, pulling together as one team to deliver what the country needed.

▲ "A host of our colleagues, all experts, from multiple divisions, made this happen for the NHS and our local communities. It has been a privilege for everyone at Sunbelt Rentals to play their part in supporting the NHS, frontline workers and communities. If you think about everything we have in our portfolio - the depot network, the transportation network, fundamentally the people - only Sunbelt Rentals could have made this happen". ▲

Mick Ledden
Managing Director - Energy Solutions
Sunbelt Rental

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SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic presented extraordinary challenges for our country and its people over a two-and-a-half-year period. It demanded a mobilisation of a network of test sites - the scale and pace of which was unprecedented.

Sunbelt Rentals was uniquely placed to respond to this national crisis, bringing so many different products and services together and gathering an extensive supply chain network to deliver the contract at the speed required, whilst ensuring safety and compliance at all times.

Our workforce stepped up and our ability to work collaboratively with both the civil service and other private organisations allowed the UK Health Security Agency to establish a testing network that proved fundamental to the success of the pandemic response.

We helped return the country back to normal and we are very proud of the instrumental role we played in helping safeguard the NHS and protecting our loved ones.



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