HSE COVID-19

Testing & Contact Tracing Update
NPHET Briefing
5th Of November 2020
1) Performance of the testing infrastructure
Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – Over 1,667,415 tests completed to date

1.8 days
Median end-to-end turn around time from referral to communication of result in community settings

1 day
Median Swab taken to lab result

89,500+
Total Swabs

87,000+
Total number of laboratory tests completed this week

19,830+
Total number of Contact Tracing calls made this week

Note: The above TaT and volume metrics refer to the seven day date range from Tuesday 27th of October – 2nd of November
Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 27th October - 2nd November.

Swabbing
- We took c.89,502 swabs samples this week – meeting all demand including serial testing.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately 48,205 taken in the community, 20,844 taken in hospitals and 20,453 taken as part of serial testing of staff in food plants and healthcare workers in residential care facilities.
- In the last week, we have had 33 testing centres in operation, with 4 pop up testing sites also in operation.
- Pop up centres are in operation in Carlow town, Donegal town, Sandyford in Dublin, South Douglas Street Centre in Cork
- Community testing requirements have decreased by 10% over the last 6 weeks. A decrease has also been seen of 37% in the last week
- 92% of GP referrals result in swabs being taken the same day or next day.

Laboratories
- Laboratories processed 87,001 tests across our network of 46 labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is approximately 4.7%, this is a decrease of 1% since this time last week.

Contact Tracing
- Contact tracing is carried out in HSE Galway, HSE Kells, HSE Cork, Defence forces Cork, Defence forces Athlone, Defence forces Dublin, Revenue Commissioners Limerick and UCD
- Our Contact Tracing teams across Public Health and CTCs completed over 19,839 phone calls in the last week
- Close contacts average at 3.6 per person
- Incorrect phone numbers being provided and multiple calls being required to get through to people is adding to CTC workload and impacting turnaround.
Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (2/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the 7 day period from 27th of October - 2nd of November.

Turnaround

• Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is 1 day.

• Over 92% of people receive their test result in less than 48 hours from swabbing appointment – with 75% in less than 36 hours.

• All contact tracing is completed within 0.8 days (median). Our target here is 1 day.

• In the last seven days, we have delivered a median turnaround time from referral to communication of result in community settings of 1.8 days.

• It is important to note that approximately 95.3% of all tests that are processed are not detected and in the last 7 days, approximately 4.7% of all tests were detected. Process and system improvements are being made continuously to meet increasing capacity requirements, to improve data quality and optimise turnaround times.
2) Testing Programmes
We are currently progressing through cycle 4 of the serial testing programme in RCFs.

To date:

- **574 facilities have** been tested to date
- **265,886 tests** have been completed
- **756 detected cases identified** (0.28% detected rate)

Cycle 4:

- **569 facilities have** been tested to date
- **46,527 tests** have been completed
- **252 detected cases identified** (0.54% detected rate)
Serial Testing of All Staff in food production facilities

We are currently progressing through cycle 4 of the serial testing programme in food production facilities.

To date;

- **84 facilities have** been tested
- **43,235 tests** have been completed
- **201 detected cases identified** (0.46% detected rate)

Cycle 2;

- **68 facilities have** been tested to date
- **13,534 tests** have been completed
- **80 detected cases identified** (0.59% detected rate)
Serial Testing of staff and residents at direct provision sites

We have previously completed a full sweep of testing of staff and residents at direct provision sites

To date;

- **68 facilities** have been tested to date
- **3,326** tests have been completed
- **18 detected cases** identified (0.54% detected rate)
Monitoring COVID-19 in schools

School Facilities
• As of November 3rd, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed in 657 schools.
• c.17,167 staff/students have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.
• Of these, 444 detected cases have been identified. This is a detected rate of 2.6%.

Childcare Facilities
• As of November 3rd, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed in 174 childcare facilities.
• c.3,566 staff/students have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.
• Of these, 190 detected cases have been identified. This is a detected rate of 5.3%.

To note: When reporting on schools to date school facilities and childcare facilities had been grouped together, these types of services have now been separated out for reporting purposes.
3) Demand Management
Community demand over the past 6 weeks

- Demand for testing in the community has decreased by 10% in the last six weeks.
- Last week saw a c.37% decrease from the previous week in demand for testing.

In parallel the following testing programmes are ongoing which are not presented in the graph:

- Tested staff in RCFs for Older Persons (tested over 15,464 staff from 28th of October- 1st of November)
- Tested staff at food plants (tested over 3,962 food plant facility staff from 28th of October- 1st of November)
Contact tracing volumes over the past 6 weeks

We continue to monitor the number of calls which are made by our contact tracing centres each week.

0.8

The volume of calls has increased by a factor of 0.8 in the last six weeks.

50%

Last week saw a 50% decrease from the previous week in the number of contact tracing calls made.
Close contacts Trend

Average number of close contacts trend

- Six weeks ago, the average number of close contacts was approximately 5.5 close contacts.

- This week we continue to see a slight drop in the average number of close contacts, on average those who have received a detected COVID 19 result have had 3.7 close contacts.
Over the past week, the community demand for testing has dropped significantly. There is no clear trend for current demand for community testing nor is it clear what impact level 5 restrictions will have as of yet. For the purpose of this projection it is forecasted that community demand will remain the same.

We are continuously monitoring this demand, which changes hourly, and implementing all possible mitigations to ensure end to end turnaround time remains within our target of <3 days.
Recruitment

Planning ahead – (staffing)

• The HSE is using this time to focus efforts on ramping up resources across our test and trace system.
• By the end of this week a total of 320 new people will have been onboarded to date to carry out swabbing activities at our community testing sites. This is in addition to the 850 staff already deployed to swabbing.
• By the end of this week, we will have 420 new contact tracers onboarded. A further 70 contact tracers are expected to be onboarded next week. This is in additional to the staff we already have assigned to the contact tracing service.
• All of these new staff form part of our dedicated testing and tracing workforce
• A six week plan is underway for service improvement in the test and trace system. Final plan and weekly progress will be communicated in due course
4) Building agility into the test and trace system
Additional supports to enhance schools testing pathway

The HSE is working closely with the Department of Education in order to continue to strengthen the schools testing pathway. These enhancements include the following:

1. A dedicated phone line for school Principals to contact public health teams with any questions/queries
2. Increased resourcing of the schools testing teams in each Public Health Department
3. Close contact appointments associated with a school appointed as priority testing.
Our median turnaround time from referral to communication of result, for detected and not detected tests over the past seven days in community settings is 1.8 days.

In the last week, we have seen a decrease in demand for community testing, by approximately 37% from this time last week.

We have reached over 1,667,415 lab results completed to date as of 2nd of November.

We continue to build agility in our system to meet the increasing community demand, examples of this include a nationwide recruitment campaign for swabbers and contact tracers, standing up temporary swabbing sites and making process improvements to our end to end test and trace system.