HSE COVID-19

Testing & Contact Tracing Update
8th of October 2020
1) Performance of the testing infrastructure
Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – Over 1,256,909 tests completed to date

1.9 days
Median end-to-end turn around time from referral to end of tracing

27 hours
Swab taken to lab result median in acute and community settings

89,500+
Total Swabs

89,600+
Total number of laboratory tests completed this week

18,120+
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 29th of September- 5th of October.
Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 29th of September - 5th of October.

Swabbing
- We took 89,543 swab samples this week – meeting all demand including serial testing. We rank amongst the highest in the EU (>2m population) on PCR testing, only exceeded by Denmark and Belgium in the last month.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately 53,338 taken in the community, 18,412 taken in hospitals and 17,793 taken as part of serial testing of staff in meat and food plants, residential care facilities and residents and staff in direct provision centres.
- In the last week, we have had 34 testing centres in operation, with 3 pop up testing sites also currently in operation.
- Community testing requirements have increased by a factor of 1.8 over the last 6 weeks. A decrease has also been seen of 2% in the last week.
- 95% of GP referrals result in swabs being taken the same day or next day.

Laboratories
- Laboratories processed c. 89,662 tests across our network of 46 labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is approximately 3.9%, this is an increase of 1% detected since this time last week.
- Lab demand on a particular day this week was in excess of 14,400 tests.

Contact Tracing
- There are contact tracing centres open in Galway, UCD and Limerick and Cork.
- Our Contact Tracing teams across Public Health and CTCs completed over 18,124 phone calls in the last week.
- Close contacts average at 5 per person – the large amount of contacts extends Call 3 effort significantly.
- 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 6 day date range from 29th of September - 5th of October.

**Turnaround**

- Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is 27 hours (median)
- In the last seven days, we have delivered a median turnaround time from referral to end of tracing in community settings of 1.9 days
- It is important to note that approximately 96.1% of all tests that are processed are not detected and in the last 7 days. 3.9% 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.
- All tracing is completed within 1.8 days (median) – including all complex cases

**Other key messages**

The 1.8 days, the time required to complete all contact tracing is due to a number of factors;

- There is an increase in the number of calls being made, with an increase of 2,338 calls on last week’s volumes.
- Calls are becoming more complex as contact tracers are met with frustration from those receiving the close contact calls.
- It is important to note that some laboratory results are received late in the evening and informing patients of a detected result takes place the next morning.
2) Testing Programmes
Serial Testing Programmes

Serial testing of congregated settings, which is now an established core component of the testing and tracing service. This testing helps to identify asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals who are in congregated settings where there is a higher risk.

**Staff in RCF for Older Persons**

- **Cycle 3**
  - 43,488 tests completed
    - (Overall > 200,000).
  - 568 Facilities
  - 138 detected cases
    - (0.32% detected rate)

**Food Production**

- 26,393 tests completed.
- 81 Facilities
- 105 detected cases
  - (0.40% detected rate)
Monitoring COVID-19 in schools

• The HSE continues to monitor COVID-19 in the school setting, this includes cases that are linked to preschools, schools and afterschool settings.
• Public health have conducted risk assessments in response to these detected cases and as of October 5th, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed in 252 schools.
• c.5,890 staff/students have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.
• Of these, 112 detected cases have been identified.
3) Demand Management
Community demand over the past 6 weeks

Demand for testing in the community has increased by a factor of 1.8 in the last six weeks.

Last week saw a 2% 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 13,782 staff from 28th – 4th of October)
- Tested of staff at food plants (over 4,555 food plant facility staff from 28th – 4th of October)
High volumes of testing continue to be forecast for the next seven days.

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.
3) Key Focus Areas
Contact Tracing Positions

• The HSE is creating standing capacity for contact tracing. Over 500 contact tracers are currently being recruited.
• The first recruitment campaign saw over 1,200 applications.
• The first new recruits will commence training this week, and as soon as they are fully operational, staff redeployed from other parts of the HSE will return to their usual roles.

Community Swabbing Positions

• The recruitment campaign for community swabbers closed on Monday 21/09/2020 with just under 3,500 applications received and interviews will be commencing immediately.
• It is anticipated that these new staff will be available to commence swabbing in October 2020, which will also allow many Allied Health Professional staff to return to their posts.
Focus of Testing and Tracing

- Recruitment, recruitment, recruitment
- The establishment of the organisational infrastructure for a 4,000 strong T&T workforce
- Agreement of testing capacity and KPIs