Title: Test and Trace Paper – NPHET

Author: Niamh O’Beirne
Organisation: HSE
Date: 25th August 2021

Action required:
☐ For noting
☑ For discussion
☐ For decision

Approved for future publication: YES/NO (remove as applicable)
1.0 Operations Monitoring

- The Testing and Tracing system is now in surge across the pathway. Demand levels remain strong.

- From the 17th – 23rd August, there were c.103,806 community referrals. Overall, total referrals have remained stable in comparison to the same time-period last week (0.38% increase).

- From 17th – 23rd August, there were:
  ➢ 2,466 international travel portal referrals (↓ 4.3% compared to last week)
  ➢ 39,162 self-referrals (↑ 4% compared to last week)

- From the 15th – 21st August, the group with the largest number of referrals were the 21-30 age group, making up 19.5% of all referrals. The detected rate for the 21-30 age group is 16%.

- Over the last 7 days, the total number of community swabs has decreased by 3% (c. 100,052 from 17th – 23rd August, compared to c. 103,067 from the 10th – 16th August). The highest community swabbing day over the past week reached c.16,789 swabs.

- Over the past week, c. 90.5% of people received a swabbing appointment in less than 24 hours. The median time to get access to swabbing is 0.2 days. The trend in respect of time to get a swabbing appointment in less than 24 hours has exceeded the target since mid-January 2021.

- From the 17th – 23rd August, there has been approximately 131,893 lab tests reported in community, private and acute labs. We are once again receiving data on volumes of lab tests completed by acute and private labs; however, this remains a partial view until both acute and private laboratories are fully reinstated.

- In the community, over the last 7 days (17th – 23rd August), the median end-to-end turnaround time from referral to:
  ➢ SMS for **not detected** tests was **1 day**
  ➢ Communication of a **detected result by call** was **1.7 days**
➢ Contact tracing completed, for detected results was 2 days

- From the 17th – 23rd August, the positivity rate in the community was 14%.

- Of those tested with close contacts during the same 7-day period, the average number of close contacts was 3.4. On the 23rd of August, the average number of close contacts per person was 3.4.

- From the 17th – 23rd August, there were:
  - 11,568 call 1s (↑ 1% compared to last week)
  - 10,719 call 2s (↑ 0.3% compared to last week)
  - 21,781 call 3s (↓ 4% compared to last week)

Serial Testing Programmes:

- All Serial testing programmes have all since a rise in positivity levels in their most recent testing cycles.

- Serial testing of Staff in Nursing Homes commenced on 20th June 2020. To date, 855,306 swabs have been completed in 598 facilities, identifying 4,877 detected cases, resulting in an 0.57% detection rate since the beginning of testing.

- Cycle 15 started on 16th August. To date, the cycle has completed 2,929 swabs and identified 53 detected cases. This results in a 1.81% detection rate.

- Serial Testing of Staff in Mental Health Facilities commenced on 21st of January 2021. To date, 8,221 swabs have been completed in 93 facilities, identifying 26 detected cases, resulting in a 0.32% detection rate.

- Cycle 8 of Serial Testing in Mental Health Facilities commenced on the 16th of August 2021. To date, the cycle has completed 177 swabs and identified 0 detected cases. This results in a 0.00% detection rate.
Cycle 7 ended on 15th August 2021. The cycle completed 324 swabs and identified 1 detected case. This resulted in a 0.31% detection rate.

- Serial Testing of Staff in Food Production Facilities commenced on 21st of August 2020. To date, 243,256 swabs have been completed in 91 facilities, identifying 1,674 detected cases, resulting in a 0.69% detection rate since the beginning of testing.

- Cycle 13 commenced on 23rd August. To date the cycle has completed 309 swabs and identified 0 detected cases, resulting in a 0.00% detection rate.

- Cycle 12 of Serial Testing in Food Production Facilities ended on 21st August. The cycle completed 13,653 swabs and identified 222 detected cases, resulting in a 1.63% detection rate.

- The demand for testing in education and childcare facilities has decreased over the previous number of weeks. In the last week (15th – 21st August):
➢ 284 tests were completed in 38 childcare facilities (6.70% positivity rate)
➢ There were no tests conducted in special education, primary school or post primary settings
➢ The median turnaround time from swab taken to result communicated in education and childcare facilities was 1.1 days.

- Recruitment of staff to support swabbing and contact tracing is ongoing. As of the 23rd of August 2021, 895 swabbers and 991 contact tracing staff have been hired and placed. Of the 991 contact tracing staff, 861 have been hired and retained as part of the dedicated workforce supporting contact tracing function whilst the 130 remaining are deployed staff from the HSE and other public service roles.

2.0 Update on Testing initiatives

1. Source Investigation/Backwards Tracing - Enhanced Contact Tracing was stepped down and effective as of Tuesday 13th July. In effect, cases with a travel history in the past 14 days are no longer required to enter the Specialised Queue (with the exception of those staying in Mandatory Hotel Quarantine). This suspension has freed up Contact Tracing capacity within our Cork and UCD CTCs.

2. Self-isolation and Restricted Movement Support - Since Tuesday July 13th, Check-in Calls to Close Contacts were temporarily suspended. Check-in calls to Index Patients were later suspended on Saturday, July 17th. This allows our workforce to expedite notifying Close Contacts of their potential exposure to the virus.

3. Alternative referral pathway for testing – Pop-up walk-in centres are currently operational in Donegal (Buncrana), Dublin (Blanchardstown, Inchicore, IMI – temporary replacement for Shrewsbury Road and Tallaght), Athlone, Kerry (Killarney), Cavan (Virginia) and Cork (South Douglas Road).

Activity remains high for all self-referrals - c. 4,300 people per day are attending as walk-ins, and an average of 5,600 per day are booking appointments via the online portal. The overall positivity rate is 14.3% from these cohorts.

Activity for day 5 testing through the travel portal is currently c. 350 tests per day.

4. Approach to Antigen testing pilot in schools/third level – The pilot currently involves 4 further education sites, 1 higher education institute and 10 childcare facilities. The sites are at various stages of the 4 week testing programme. Participants have reported no issues with the self-testing process and engagement with the programme remains high. A number of additional facilities have been identified to commence the pilot in early September.

Results reported to date consist of 877 Not detected, 2 Detected and 5 Invalid.

The Detected antigen results were both confirmed as positive Covid-19 cases on PCR testing and were both from a further education site.

5. Testing at Quarantine sites – As decided by the Department of Health, all passengers arriving into Ireland from designated states are now required to pre-book accommodation in a designated quarantine facility. Testing resources have been made available in Quarantine Facilities since 26th March 2021 and are available at the on a daily basis to accommodate the testing of all new arrivals. The scope of testing includes the below:

- Testing of passengers arriving into Ireland from Category 2 Countries on Day 0 and Day 10
• Testing of Passengers arriving into Ireland from Category 1 countries that have not been able to produce a negative test result
• Testing of Quarantine Hotel Staff on a weekly basis
• Unaccompanied Minors arrive into Ireland from a Category 2 country

Data as of 10:00am-24th August 2021

• 8 x Quarantine Facilities Tested *(4 currently in operation)*
• 66 x Unaccompanied Minors Tested
• 30,904 x Referrals for Mandatory Quarantine Testing
• 25,353 x Swabs
• 546 x Covid-19 Detected Tests *(1.9% Detection Rate)*
• 486 x Covid-19 Detected Cases