Title: Test and Trace Paper – NPHET

Data is for week 12th January 2022 to 18th January 2022

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Organisation: HSE
Date: 20th January 2022

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

Approved for future publication: YES/NO (remove as applicable)
1.0 Executive Summary

- The Test and Trace system has been operating at surge until the past weekend, when there was a significant drop in overall demand for testing. We continue to actively monitor the demand status, considering the evolving needs and potential service demands in the context of virus transmission within the community.

- HSE has increased capacity from 100,000 tests per week to 900,000 tests per week. PCR Testing capacity is 300,000 per week from the original 100,000 per week baseline capacity. Antigen Testing Capacity has increased from 0 to 600,000 per week (700,000 in surge).

- Community referrals have decreased by 53% in comparison to the same time-period last week while community positivity is now at 55.2%.

- 196,661 Laboratory PCR tests were undertaken last week, and 230,730 Antigen Test kits were made available to individuals and programmes last week.

- 15,862 GP referrals were received last week which is a decrease of 80% compared to the previous week.

- Swabs completed in the community were 135,941, this is a 47% decrease in comparison to the same time-period last week.

- The highest number of swabs in the community over the past week was 32,342 swabs (including test centre and outbreak referrals).

- The single highest day for testing referrals to date was on Wednesday, 29th December 2021 with over 77,312 referrals recorded in total, 11,052 of these being self-referrals.

- The single lowest day for testing referrals in the current wave was on Saturday, 16th January 2022 with 12,335 referrals recorded in total, with 8,001 of these being self-referrals.

- The median end to end TAT for a not-detected result in the Community is 1.2 days.

- The median end to end TAT for a detected result in the Community is 1.9 days.

- Over 1,006,281 Antigen Test Kits have been dispatched to date through the Home Delivery Programme.

- Over 567,069 Antigen Test Kits have been dispatched to Other Programmes to date, including Acute, CHO, DAFM and RCF testing.

- In total, there have been over 1,573,350 Antigen Test Kits dispatched to date.

- A solution to enable uploading of positive antigen results and enablement of close contact management has been developed and became available on Friday 14th of January. Since the launch of the Antigen Portal on Friday the 14th of January 2022, 25,701 positive antigen results have been reported. All antigen test results are self-reported and not subject to validation.

- Changes to Public Health advice were introduced on Friday 14th January, including the key change that a positive antigen result is now considered to be a case and individuals can list their close contacts on the HSE portal.
2.0 Service Status

The Test and Trace system has been operating at surge until the past weekend, when there was a significant drop in overall demand for testing. Though capacity remains in place at present, we continue to actively monitor the demand status, considering the evolving needs and potential service demands in the context of the virus transmission within the community.

3.0 Current Trends

3.1 Overview

- From the 12th – 18th January, there were **130,136 community referrals**. Overall, total community referrals have **decreased by 53%** in comparison to the same time-period last week while Community **positivity is at c.55.2%**.

![Total Community Referrals and Positivity Rates Week on Week](image)

- From 12th – 18th January, there were:
  - **78,757 Self-referrals**
    (Note: The figure included in the report submitted on 12th January did not include Confirmatory PCR within the self-referrals data. This has been rectified in the current report. The current figure of 78,757 has decreased by 5% in comparison to the same time period last week)
  - **15,862 GP referrals**
• Over the last 7 days, the number of swabs completed in the community was 135,941 this is a 47% decrease in comparison to the same time-period last week. The highest community swabbing day over the past week reached 32,342 swabs. In contrast, the lowest community swabbing day over the past week was 12,335 swabs.

• Approximately 90.9% of GP and Close Contact Referrals received an appointment on the same day or on the next day.

• From the 12th – 18th January, there have been approximately 196,661 lab tests reported in community, private and acute labs.

• In the community, over the last 7 days (12th – 18th January), the median end-to-end turnaround time from referral to:
  - SMS for not detected tests was 1.2 days
  - Communication of a detected result by call was 2.7 days
  - Contact tracing completed, for detected results was 1.9 days

*The report submitted on the 12th of January contained some duplicated data which has since been rectified.*
• Of those tested with close contacts during the same 7-day period, the average number of close contacts was 2.5.

• From 12th – 18th January, there were:
  ➢ 79,202 call 1s (↓54% compared to last week)

*Note: The reporting of Close Contacts is being reviewed in light of changes introduced relating to Antigen testing on Friday, January 14th
3.2 Antigen Testing Pathways

3.2.1 Sectoral Screening Programmes

*Note 1: Other programmes: Acute/CHO/DAFM/RCF
*Note 2: All dispatch figures refer to antigen test kits, each containing 5 individual tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Total Test kits dispatched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Deliveries</td>
<td>1,006,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programmes</td>
<td>567,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,573,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Changes to Public Health Advice

From 14th January:

- Positive antigen results are considered to be a case, so individuals will no longer be asked to obtain a confirmatory PCR test.
- Individuals who are a confirmed case (antigen or PCR) will be asked to report their positive antigen test and list their contacts on the HSE portal.
- Close contacts of either a positive antigen case or positive PCR case will receive an SMS directing them to the HSE website so they can find out what (if any) testing they need and if they need to restrict their movements.

Since the launch of the Antigen Portal on Friday, 14th of January 2022, 25,701 positive antigen results have been reported. All antigen test results are self-reported and not subject to validation.

3.2.3 Antigen tests to support Healthcare Workers to return to work

A supply of antigen tests has been provided to Acute Hospitals, Community Healthcare Organisations and Residential Care settings to support the derogation of Health Care Workers essential for critical services. A key element of this derogation is completion of an antigen test for purposes of return to the workplace after Day 7 of isolation for those with a Covid-19 diagnosis, and on Day 0 and every second day as required during a period of derogation for those who are asymptomatic close contacts of a confirmed case.
3.3 Serial Testing Programmes

The table below provides an overview of the serial testing programmes since their inception, and a breakdown of the current testing cycle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Testing Programme Overview</th>
<th>Nursing Homes</th>
<th>Mental Health</th>
<th>Food Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Referrals Since Programme Inception</td>
<td>1,332,906</td>
<td>26,098</td>
<td>392,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Swabs Since Programme Inception</td>
<td>940,404</td>
<td>9,890</td>
<td>276,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Detected Cases Since Programme Inception</td>
<td>6,696</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detected Rate Since Programme Inception</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Cycle</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Referrals in Current Cycle</td>
<td>33,530</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Swabs in Current Cycle</td>
<td>16,931</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Detected Cases in Current Cycle</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detected Rate for Current Cycle</td>
<td>5.62%</td>
<td>11.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This programme has been paused indefinitely

The graphs below provide an overview of the Serial Testing Programmes per cycle since programme inception:

3.3.1 Serial Testing in Nursing Homes:

![Swabs completed and detection rate per cycle in Nursing Homes](image)

3.3.2 Serial Testing in Mental Health Facilities:

![Swabs completed and detection rate per cycle in Mental Health facilities](image)
3.3.3 Serial Testing in Food Production Facilities (paused indefinitely):
4.0 Current Capacity

National capacity for:

- Community swabbing appointments is 39,000 as at 17th January
- Capacity in Acutes is up to 7,000.
- Capacity in Serial Testing approximately 2,000 per week (self-swabbing).

Although capacity remains in place at present, the demand has reduced very significantly with an average of less than 14,000 appointments daily in the last 4 days, and lots of self-referral slots available in all areas.

There are now 45 testing centres in operation nationally - 35 community swabbing centres and an additional 10 community swabbing centres operated by private operators under HSE NAS governance in Dublin, Cork, Athlone, Limerick, Newbridge, Dundalk, New Ross, Naas.

Standing capacity for laboratory testing is now 42,000 tests as at 17th January for both Community and Acutes.
5.0 Future Scenarios/Model and Impact

A model run was completed on 7th January 2022. The IEMAG scenarios used were dated 4th January 2022. All scenarios utilised assume vaccine effectiveness is reduced with Omicron infection with boosters restoring VE to 70%. These scenarios are consistent with the scenarios assumed for the purpose of the C-19 hospital demand and capacity modelling.

The next iteration of these model outputs is due on 21st January 2022.

At this point the key indicators are;

- Decrease in referrals for testing of 53% in comparison to the same time-period last week
- On peak days we have taken 32,342 swabs in the community, compared to 12,335 on our lowest day
- Community positivity has started to decrease and is now at c.55.2%

We know there are a significant number of positive cases identified through antigen testing or not identified through testing that are outside the public health system. We await further data on this from the updated IEMAG modelling.
6.0 Appendices

Surge response measures
Measures already implemented are set out below. Most elements of the surge plan have now been implemented. Considering the recent reduction in demand for testing, the Public Health guidance and the overall strategy for Test and Trace in the coming weeks and months will determine whether any additional surge measures will be required.

Several actions have been taken since July 2021 to reduce the demand on Swabbing and Laboratories and to increase capacity across Contact Tracing, as listed below:

Referrals and Swabbing
- Expanded opening hours and enhanced rostering.
- Introduced measures to increase swabbing capacity (3rd party resources, Defence Forces, NAS pop up).
- Pop up and home testing has been increased to cover 2,500 appointments.
- Re-directed public to book tests online and stopped walk-ins to reduce admin activity at test sites and better manage the structure of the day and traffic management at busy sites).
- Recruitment campaign re-launched on 15th November resulting in a total of 2,000 swabbers.
- Engagement of private testing providers operating on the HSE’s behalf, to provide additional testing capacity of over 6,000 appointments daily across Dublin, Cork, Shannon and Athlone.
- 4 new sites opened in Newbridge, Dundalk, New Ross, Naas bringing the total number of sites to 45.

Laboratories
- Activated additional onshore and offshore capacity as well as additional capacity in acute hospital laboratories.
- Prioritisation of symptomatic cohorts and measures taken to temporarily increase turnaround times.

Contact Tracing
- Check in calls to increase capacity on calls 1, 2 and 3
- Added case listing contacts onto portal
- Upskilling of 154 Level 2 contact tracers to Level 1 to increase contact tracing capacity
- Reduction of Positive Patient Assessment (PPA) questions to minimum; max call time 25 mins (Call 2A)
- Workforce Management initiatives, including offering part time workers increased hours, offering Contact Tracers working a 4-hour shift overtime during busiest days, re-assignment of CMP Staff to Contact Tracing and temporary re-focus of ring-fenced CMP Contact Tracers assigned to complex settings with Departments of Public Health to CMP core functions
- Reduced Positive Uncontactable Cases from 4 Days to 2 Days followed by a letter
- Introduced a reduction in Contact Tracing Days for flight contact tracing
- Implemented support from the Irish Defence Forces
- Updated work instructions relating to quantity of attempts made to Close Contacts and Index Patients to 3 attempts over one full workday
- Increased capacity of Data Processing Team to facilitate anticipated demand arising from Schools
- Amended exclusion criteria for Book a Test portal to increase volume of users who are eligible
- Updated pre-Call 2A SMS to encourage increased use of the ‘List Your Contacts’ portal, and remove any reference to outbound CTC calls
• Only gather contacts associated with 9 Public Health priority areas, for example, hospitals, RCFs
• Amend current exclusion criteria on List Your Contact to allow more patients to use portal
• Suspending validation calls to service-users who opt to utilise the ‘List Your Contacts’ portal
• HSE Communications team to enhance publicity of the ‘List Your Contacts’ portal.

Antigen for Symptomatic Individuals (4 to 39 years)

• The distribution of antigen testing for symptomatic users, for 4-to-39-year-olds was launched on Monday 3\textsuperscript{rd} January as a means to increase overall testing capacity
• The introduction of antigen testing to symptomatic users is in line with ECDC guidance, which states that rapid antigen testing can contribute to the overall COVID-19 testing capacity offering an advantage in terms of shorter turnaround time and reduced cost, especially in situations where testing capacity is reduced (October 2021)
• Antigen test kits are being delivered to symptomatic individual’s homes, once they order an antigen test kit online via the HSE webpage.

Positive Antigen Reporting and Close Contact Follow Up

• The introduction of positive antigen reporting results as cases and listing close contacts commenced on 14\textsuperscript{th} January 2022.

END