

**HSE COVID-19**

**Testing & Contact Tracing Update  
17<sup>th</sup> of December 2020**



# 1) Performance of the testing infrastructure



# Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – 2,133,352 tests completed to date



1.5 days

Community - median end to end for a not detected result



2.1 days

Community - median end to end for a detected result



87,200+

Total Swabs last week



82,070+

Total number of laboratory tests last week



10,010+

Total number of Contact Tracing calls made last week

Note: The above TaT and volume metrics refer to the seven day date range from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December.



Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

Building a  
Better Health  
Service

# Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December.

## Swabbing

- **c.87,206 swabs samples** this week – meeting all demand including serial testing.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately **39,387 taken in the community**, **25,516 taken in hospitals** and **22,303 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 static testing centres** in operation, with 3 pop up testing sites also in operation.
- Pop up centres are in operation in Carlow town, Donegal town and Charlestown in Finglas.
- Community testing demand has increased by **26%** over the last 6 weeks. There has been a significant increase in community demand of **30% in the last week**.
- **94%** of GP referrals result in swabs being taken the same day or next day.

## Laboratories

- Laboratories processed **82,072 tests** across our network of 46 labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is **approximately 2.7%**, this is an increase of 0.2% since from last week.

## Contact Tracing

- Contact tracing is carried out in Galway (HSE), Limerick (HSE and Revenue), Cork (HSE), Dublin (Sandyford), Dublin (UCD), Dublin central (HSE)
- Our Contact Tracing teams across Public Health and CTCs completed over **10,016 phone calls** in the last week.
- Close contacts average at **3.8** per person and rising

We thank the general public who have all worked to significantly reduce their number of close contacts over the last number of weeks. We should channel these significant efforts over the Christmas period and prioritise who we meet in order to limit the number of our close contacts.

# Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (2/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the 7 day date range from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> of December.

## Turnaround

- Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is **1.1 days**.
- All calls are completed within **0.8 days (median)** – including all complex cases.
- In the last seven days, in the community, we have delivered a **median end to end turnaround time of 1.5 days for not detected results**.
- In the last seven days, in the community, we have delivered a **median end to end turnaround time of 2.1 days for detected results**.
- In the last 7 days, 2.7% of all tests were detected COVID-19 and approximately 97.3% of tests had a not detected result.

## 2) Testing Programmes



# Serial Testing of All Staff in Residential Care Facilities

Cycle 6 of serial testing has commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> December and will run for four weeks.

## Cycle 6 to date;



**278 facilities** have been tested



**14,087** tests have been completed



**58 detected cases identified** (0.41% detected rate).



# Serial Testing of All Staff in Food Production Facilities

Cycle 4 of serial food production facilities commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2020.

## Cycle 4 to date;



**30 facilities** have been tested



**7,144 tests** have been completed



**34 detected cases identified** (0.48% detected rate).





# Monitoring COVID-19 in Schools & Childcare Facilities

## School and Childcare Facilities

- As of December 15<sup>th</sup>, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed **in 1,218 facilities**. This includes schools and childcare facilities.
- **c.34,662 tests** have been carried out as part of this mass testing programme.
- Of these, **933 detected cases** have been identified. This is a detected rate of 2.7%.



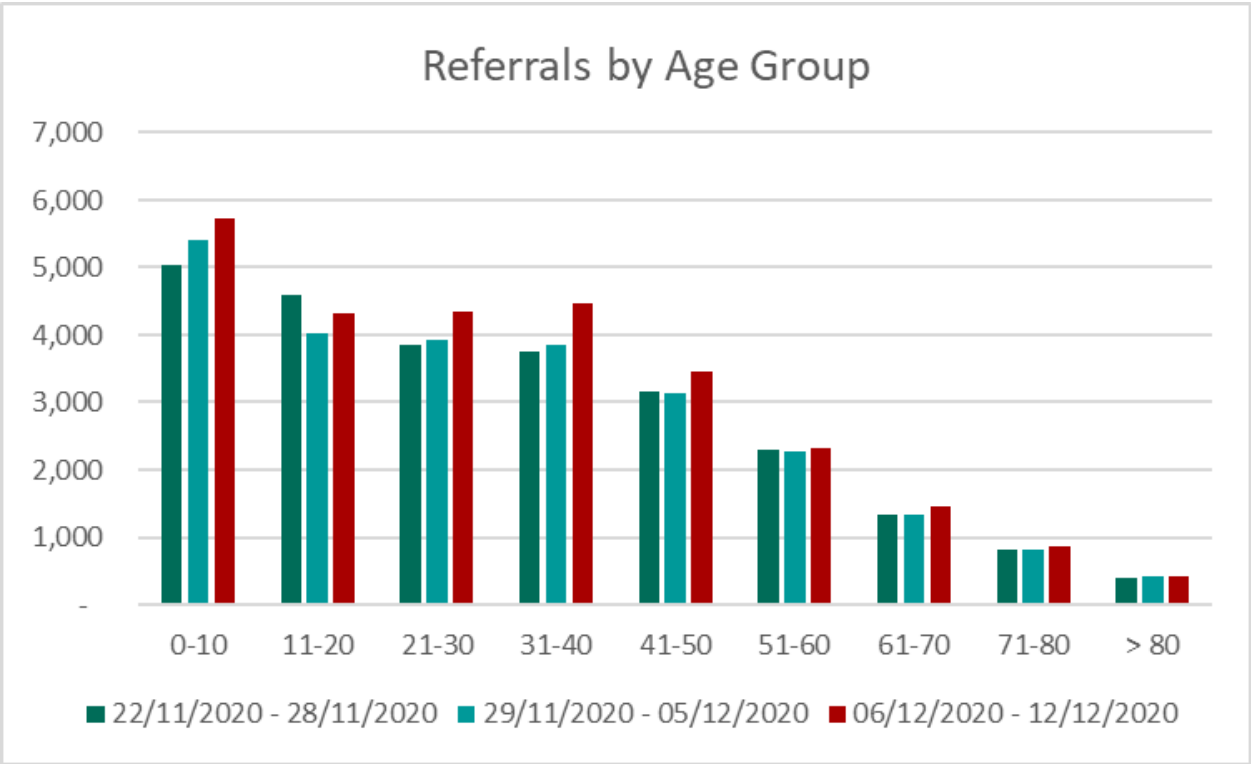
### **3) Test and Trace Trends**



# Total count of referrals by age group

## Referrals by Age Group

- The graph shows referrals by age group over the past three weeks.
- This graph gives an insight into the demand for testing of symptomatic individuals and their age profile.
- In the last week, the age groups with the highest percentage of referrals were;
  - the **0-10 age group**, which made up **20.9%** of all referrals. The detected rate of this age group was 3.0%.
  - the **31-40 age group** which made up **16.3%** of all referrals. The detected rate of this age group was 5.8%.



# Community demand over the past 6 weeks

30%



Last week saw a c.30% increase from the previous week in demand for testing.

26%



Demand for testing in the community has increased by 26% in the last six weeks.

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

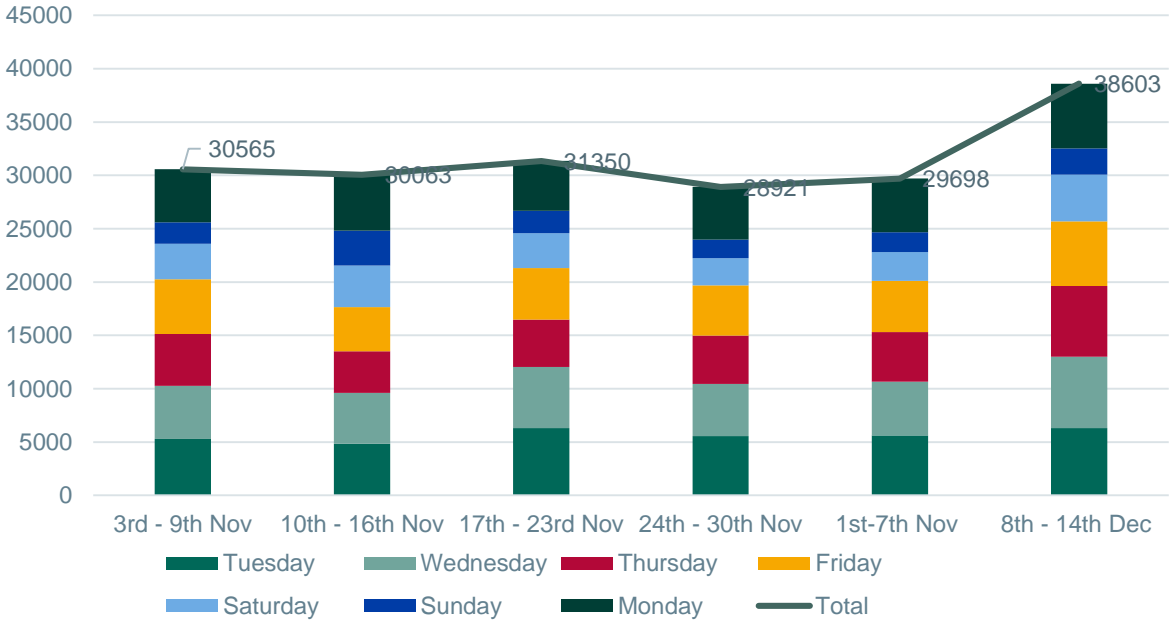


Tested staff in Residential Care Facilities (tested over 16,215 staff from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December)



Tested staff at food plants (tested over 6,088 food plant facility staff from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December)

Community Testing Demand



# Contact tracing volumes over the past 6 weeks



17%



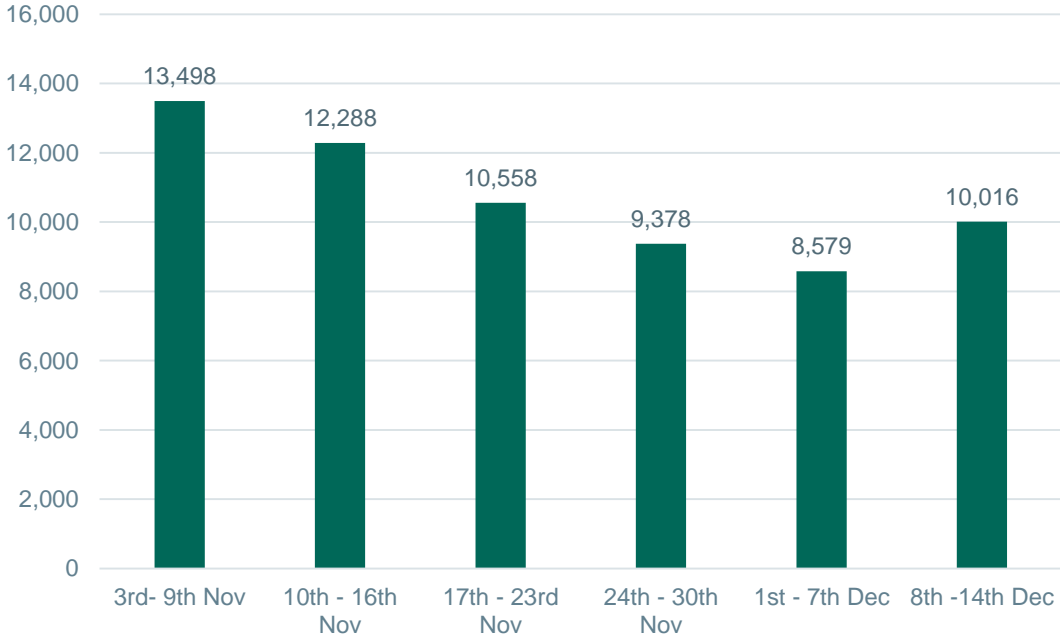
The volume of calls has increased by **17%** in the last week.

25%



The last six weeks saw a c.**25%** decrease in the number of contact tracing calls made.

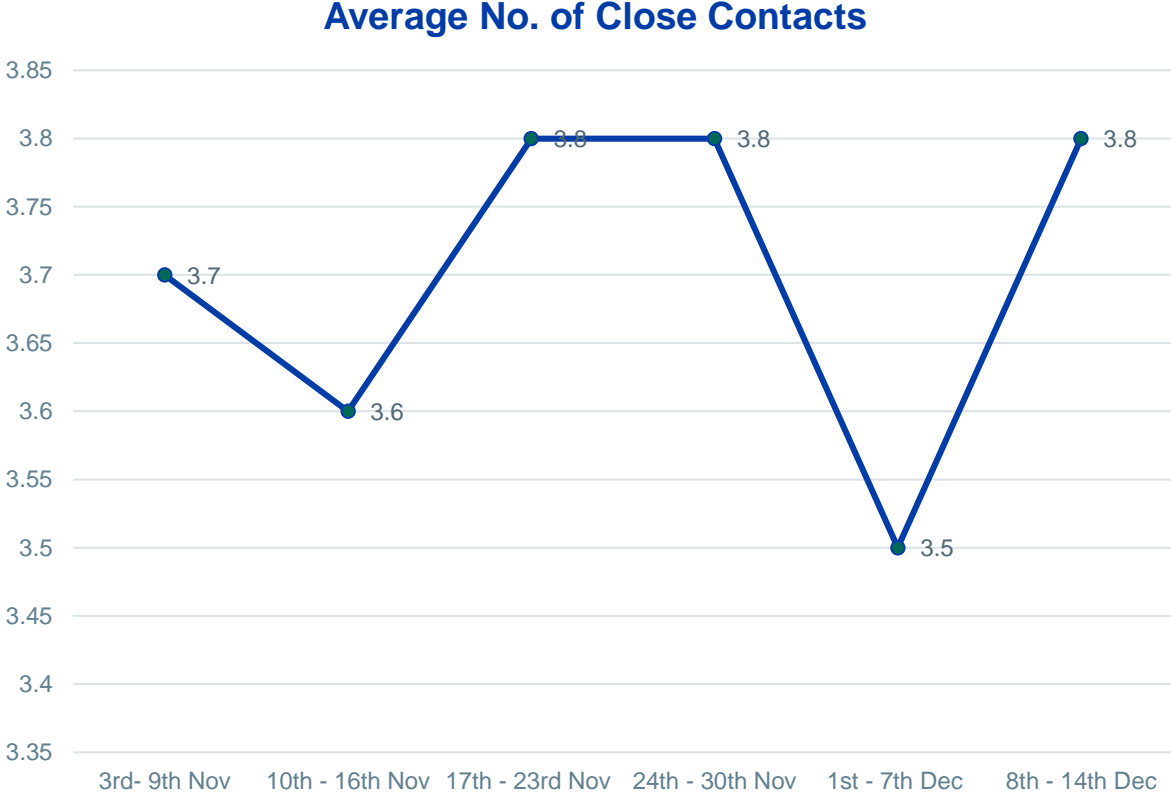
Total Contact Tracing Calls



# Close Contacts Trend

## Average number of close contacts trend.

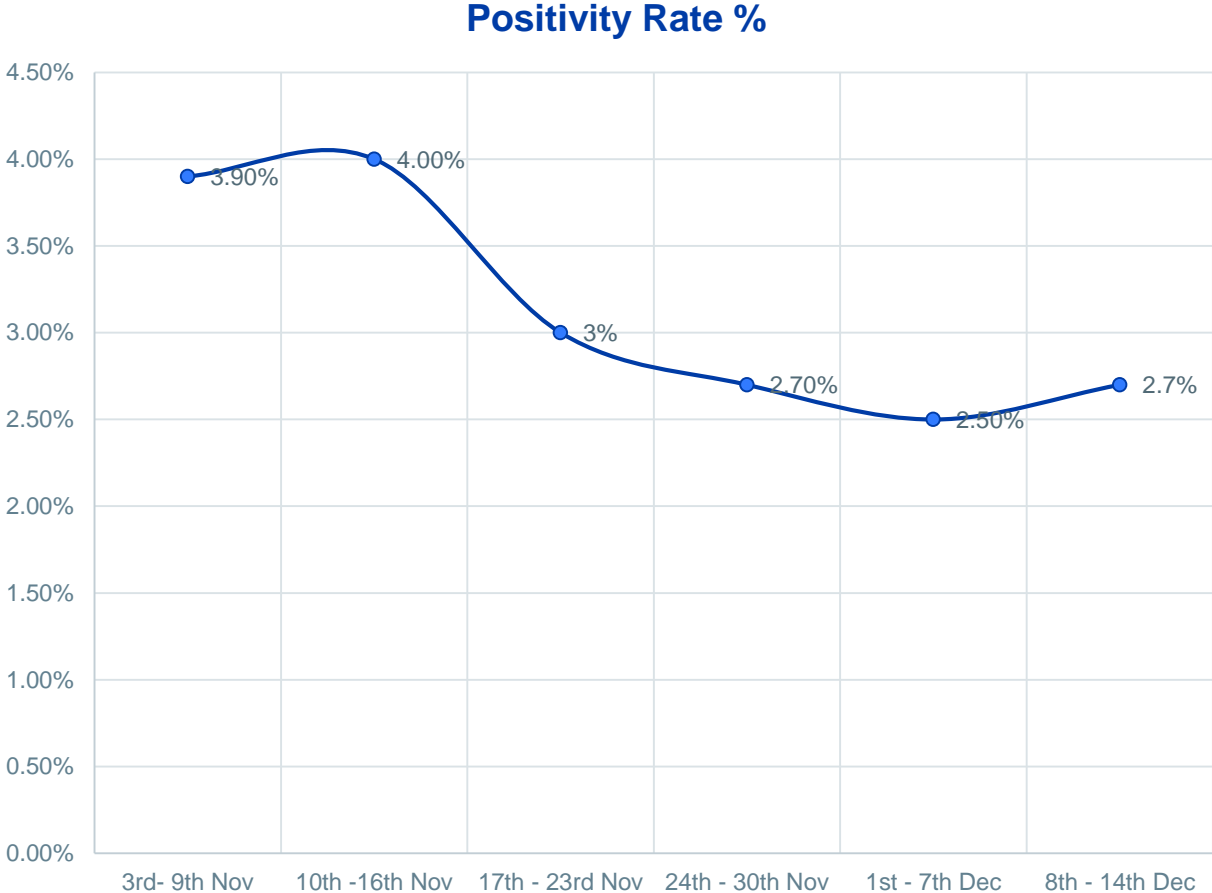
- There remains very little change in the number of close contacts per person in the last six weeks. This ranges from 3.5 – 3.8 close contacts per person.
- Last week the average number of **close contacts per person is 3.8.**



# Positivity Trend

## Positivity Rate

- This week **the positivity rate has increased to 2.7%**.
- This is an increase of 0.2% from the previous week, where the positivity rate was 2.5%.



## 4) Enhancements to the test and trace system





# Recruitment across Swabbing and Contact Tracing

## Recruitment

The HSE is focusing efforts and increasing resources across our test and trace system, in both swabbing and contact tracing.

## Swabbing

By week ending December 20<sup>th</sup>, an additional 615 people have been onboarded to carry out swabbing activities.

## Contact Tracing

As of December 15<sup>th</sup>, 741 contact tracers have been onboarded.

A further 55 contact tracers are expected to be onboarded by week ending 20<sup>th</sup> of December.



# NAS Pop Up Fleet

- An enhancement which has been made to our Test and Trace system is the **NAS pop up fleet**.
- 6 out of 12 NAS fleets have been distributed across the country, with the remaining 6 to go live at the end of January 2021.
- Our fleet is available to **rapidly respond** on a 7 day a week basis.
- Decision making on this fleet will be informed by agreed triggers and protocols.
- Each fleet has
  - 6 team members
  - 4 vehicles
  - 1 shelter
  - Their own ICT and printing capability



# Case Identification and Source Investigation Pilot

- A case identification and source investigation pilot ran from 9<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> of December.
- The pilot was coordinated by CMP Public Health with the Department of Public Health Midwest, the Contact Tracing Centre (CTC) in Limerick and the HPSC.
- The results of this pilot are now being evaluated and several factors are being considered.
- These include but are not limited to:
  - The effectiveness of tracing the case back to the source
  - Whether source identification helps to identify clusters/ outbreaks
  - Steps needed to roll case identification and source investigation out nationally.



# Contacts and Christmas

- Over the Christmas period we must all be mindful and take personal responsibility for the contacts which we meet. Every contact counts.
- The HSE has created a [Contact calculator \(hse.ie\)](https://www.hse.ie) to help each of us to count our contacts that we will meet in different settings.
- It is possible, that during this period, we can gain a large number of contacts without realising, this contact calculator aims to increase awareness.

## Contact calculator

Use this tool to plan your Christmas activities and count your contacts

Having visitors to your home	-	3	+
Visiting someone else's home	-	3	+
Exercising indoors with other people	-	0	+
Meeting people inside a café, bar or restaurant	-	3	+
Going to a house party or family event	-	0	+
Other indoor gathering or activity	-	4	+

### Your Results

13

You plan to be in contact with 13 people between now and 1 January.

The lower your number of contacts the lower your risk of catching COVID-19 or spreading the virus to others. Choose which activities are most important to you and reduce the number of people you plan to meet.

If you're spending Christmas with older or vulnerable members of your family, reduce your contacts so they can have a safe Christmas.

# Christmas and the Test and Trace System

- It is normal practice for the HSE to plan, operate and roster over holiday periods such as Christmas.
- Test and Trace is a new component of the service this year, and to-date it has operated on a consistent 7 day per week schedule.
- Test and Trace will continue to operate over the coming Christmas and New Year's period (24<sup>th</sup> of December – 4<sup>th</sup> of January).
- This includes referral, swabbing, laboratory, results communication and contact tracing activity.
- We have **ongoing communications with our GP practice colleagues** to stand up an **enhanced out of hours referral** presence over the Christmas period.
- Serial Testing activity will also continue for Residential Care Facilities for older persons and Food Production facilities. There is an agreed testing schedule which accounts for operational periods over the Christmas break.





# Conclusion

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Our median end to end turnaround time is **1.5 days for not detected cases** and **2.1 days for not detected cases**.



In the last week, we have seen an increase in demand for community testing, by approximately **26%** from this time last week.



As of 15<sup>th</sup> of December, there are over **2,133,352** lab results completed to date.