

HSE COVID-19

**Testing & Contact Tracing Update
7th of January 2021**



1) Performance of the Testing Infrastructure



Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – 2,491,983 tests completed to date



2 days

Community - median end to end for a not detected result



2.9 days

Community - median end to end for a detected result



164,270+

Total Swabs last week



160,400+

Total number of laboratory tests last week



95,430

Total number of Contact Tracing calls made last week

Note: The above TaT and volume metrics refer to the seven day date range from 28th of December – 4th of January.

Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 28th of December – 4th of January.

Swabbing

- **c. 164,276 swabs samples** this week – meeting all demand including serial testing.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately **120,635 taken in the community**, **22,367 taken in hospitals** and **21,274 taken as part of serial testing** of Staff in Food Plants and Residential Care Facilities.
- In the last week, we have had **34 static testing centres** in operation, with **5 pop up testing site** also in operation (Cleary Centre in Donegal Town, St. Joseph's Limerick, Cusack park Ennis, South Douglas Rd Cork City and Slane)
- Community testing demand has increased by **282%** over the last 6 weeks. There has been a significant increase in community demand of **64% in the last week**.
- **72.7%** of GP referrals are provided with a COVID-19 test appointment within 24 hours.

Laboratories

- Laboratories processed **160,407 tests** across our network of labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is **approximately 20.1%**, this is an increase of 13.5% since from last week.

Contact Tracing

- Contact tracing is carried out in our centres in Galway, Limerick, Cork and Dublin.
- Close contacts average at **4.8** per person.
- Our Contact Tracing teams across Public Health and CTCs completed c. **95,430 phone calls*** to inform and give public health advice to positive individuals and to collect details of their close contacts and to inform close contacts of these cases

**Please note that on the 1st Jan we changed the way we organise our work to respond to the significant surge in cases by doing call 1 (inform positive patient) and call 2 (take contact details) together – from next week we will report on these calls as one – as opposed separately as above. We will also modify our dashboard to reflect this change. Please also note as of 1st Jan close contacts no longer receive a phone call, they receive an sms to notify them and to give public health advice.*

Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (2/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the 7 day date range from 28th of December – 4th of January.

Turnaround

- Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is **1 day**.
- **72% of people receive their test result in less than 36 hours and over 95% within 48 hours**
- All contact tracing calls are completed within **1 day (median)**
- In the last seven days, in the community, we have delivered a **median end to end turnaround time of 2 days for not detected results.**
- In the last seven days, in the community, we have delivered a **median end to end turnaround time of 2.9 days for detected results.**

Due to significantly high demand over the Christmas period and the increased level of positivity rate, from 6.6% of all COVID-19 tests this time last week to 20.1% positivity rate this week, the end to end turnaround time for the COVID-19 tests has slightly increased.

2) Testing Programmes



Serial Testing of All Staff in Residential Care Facilities

Cycle 6 of serial testing of RCF's concluded a four week cycle on January 3rd.

Cycle 7 of serial testing of RCFs has commenced on January 4th.

In Cycle 6;



582 facilities have been tested



66,448 tests have been completed



811 detected cases identified (1.22% detected rate)

This is the **highest overall detected rate for a serial testing cycle to date.**



Serial Testing of All Staff in Food Production Facilities

Cycle 4 of serial food production facilities commenced on 7th of December 2020.

In Cycle 4 to date;



88 facilities have been tested



14,318 tests have been completed



85 detected cases identified (0.59% detected rate).



Monitoring COVID-19 in Schools & Childcare Facilities

School and Childcare Facilities

- As of January 5th, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed **in 1,527 facilities**. This includes schools and childcare facilities.
- **c.44,439 tests** have been carried out as part of this mass testing programme.
- Of these, **1,348 detected cases** have been identified. This is a detected rate of 3.1%.



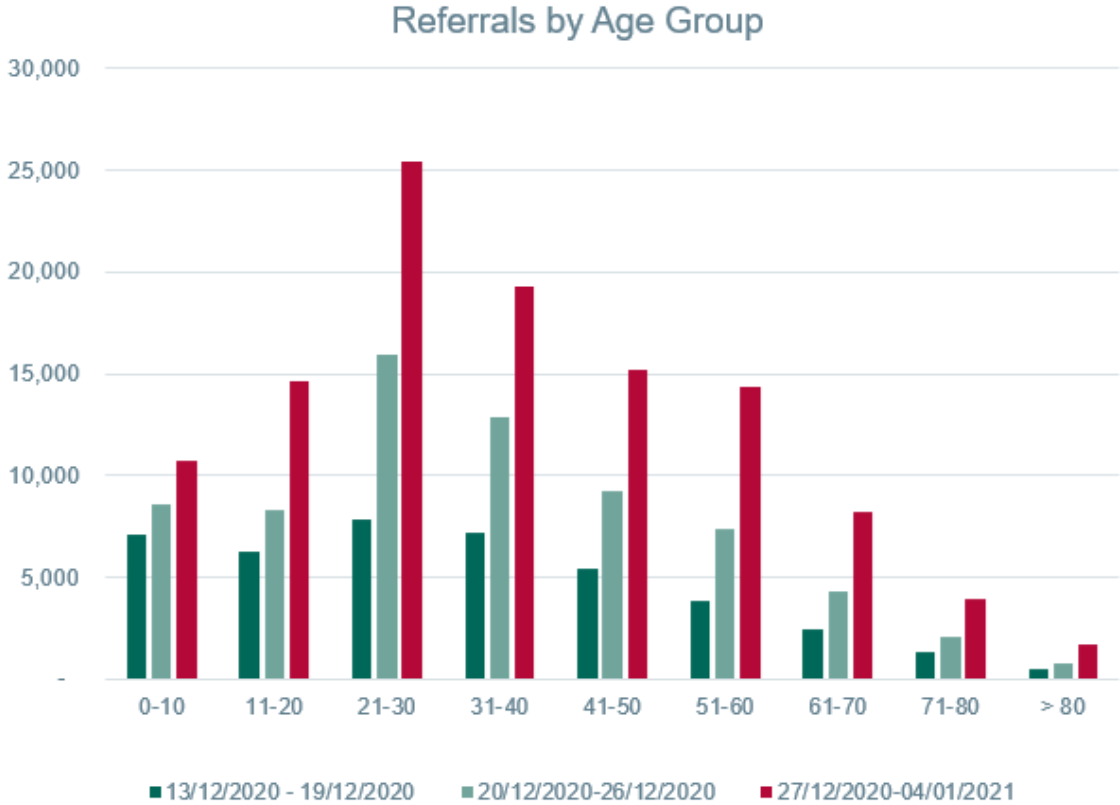
3) Test and Trace Trends



Total Count of Referrals by Age Group

Referrals by Age Groups

- This graph gives an insight into the demand for testing of symptomatic individuals and their age profile, over the past three weeks.
- Demand for testing has increased across each age group over the past three weeks.
- In the last week, the age groups with the highest percentage of referrals was the **21-30 age group**, which made up **22.4%** of all referrals. The detected of this age group was significantly high at **25%**.



Community Demand over the past 6 weeks

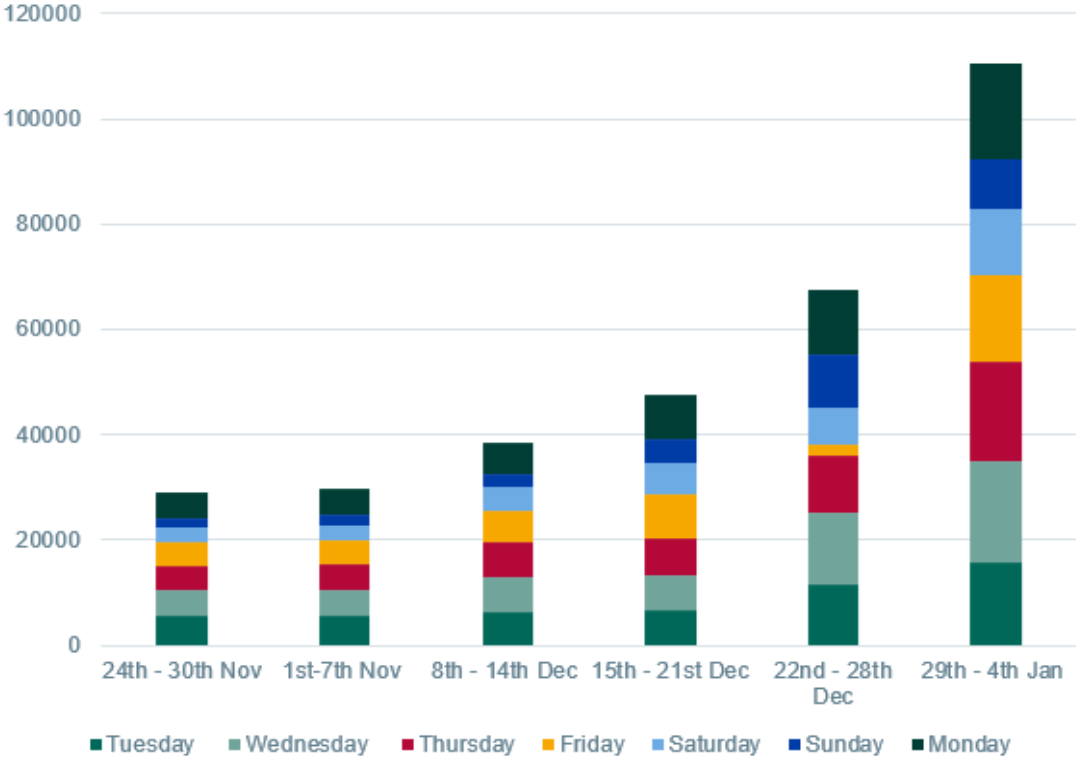
64% ↑ Last week saw a **64% increase from the previous week** in demand for testing

282% ↑ Demand for testing in the community has **increased by 282% in the last six weeks.**


Addressing this Demand


- The Community Testing team are working above the stated capacity at present with over 21,000 appointments offered in Community Testing centres on an individual day.
- To deliver this level of testing, the full team of over 600 dedicated community swabbers are being deployed while resources have been augmented with staff from Defence Forces as well as support from teams from NAS.
- There are 35 permanent community testing centres currently operating. In addition, we are deploying additional pop-up test centres in areas of most acute need. NAS Pop Up Teams are also supporting large outbreak testing as required.

Community Testing Demand



Contact Tracing Volumes over the past 6 weeks

87%  Last week saw an **87% increase from the previous week** in calls completed*

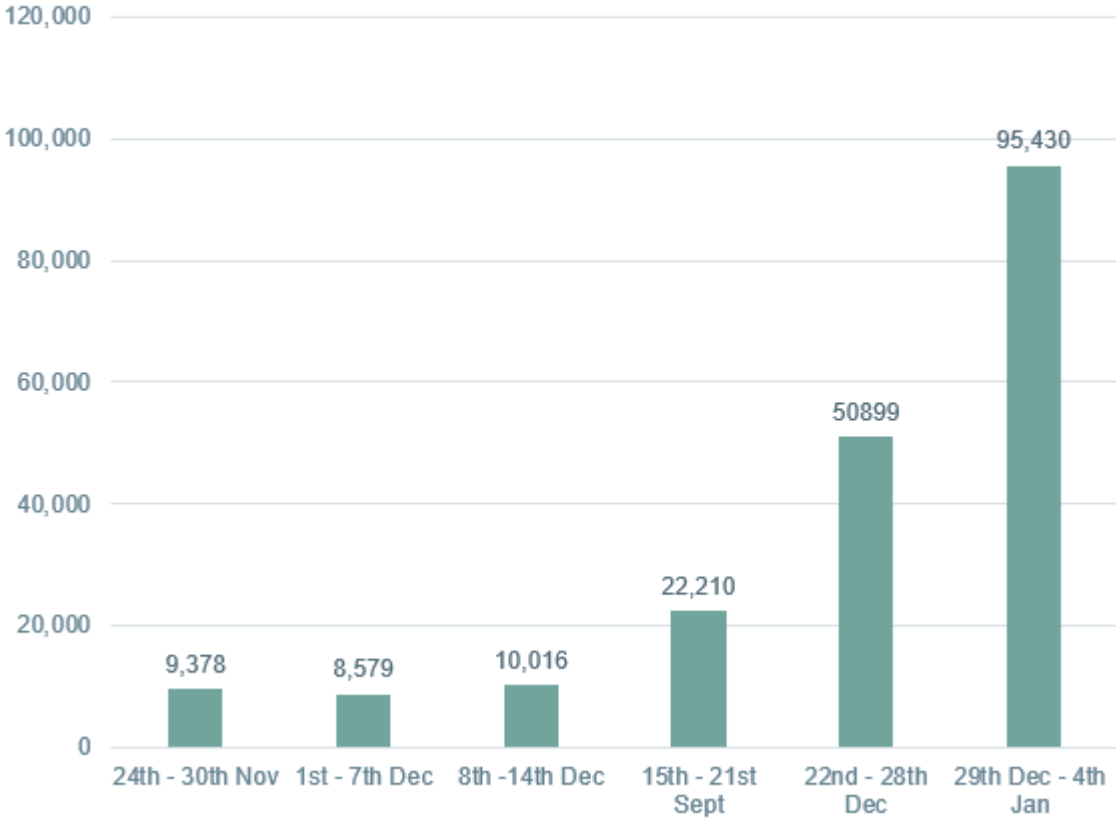
917%  The number of calls completed has **increased by 917% in the last six weeks.**

Addressing this Demand

- The significant influx in call volumes has had an impact in our contact tracing centres.
- This increase has required a scaled back response in the number of questions asked on contact tracing calls allowing for shorter calls in order to address the increasing volumes.
- A decision was made to discontinue the testing of asymptomatic close contacts.
- We continue to test all close contacts in outbreak settings such as hospitals, nursing homes and schools.

**See note slide 4; From next week we will report on combined call 1 and 2 where we have seen a 255% increase in calls made to individuals detected with COVID19 from 29th Dec – 04th Jan*

Total Contact Tracing Calls



Close Contacts Trend

4.8

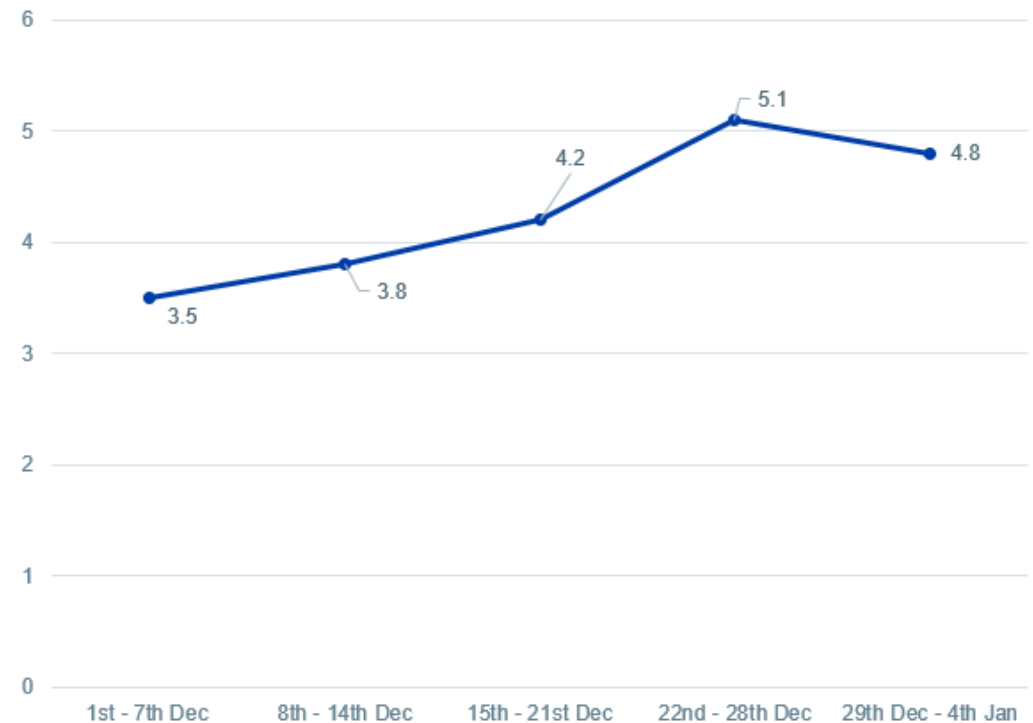


Last week saw a **slight decrease** in the number of close contacts, 4.8 close contacts per person.

Testing of Close Contacts

- Due to the large volume of testing required, a decision has been made to discontinue the testing of asymptomatic close contacts to prioritise those who are symptomatic in our community.
- Close contacts identified that are associated with a school setting and outbreak setting continue to be tested.
- The HSE asks anybody who has been identified as a close contact to ensure that they restrict their movements for 14 days in order to minimize potential transmission of COVID-19.
- Advice for [Close Contacts](#) and [restricting your movements](#) can be found on the HSE Website.

Average No. of Close Contacts



Positivity Trend

20.1%



Last week saw a major increase in the number of COVID-19 tests that have a positive result, **20.1% of all COVID-19 tests are positive.**

This is comparison to last week where 6.6% of all tests were positive.



4) Enhancements to the test and trace system



Recruitment

Recruitment

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

Swabbing

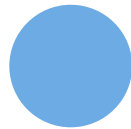
- There is a total of 631 community swabbers have been hired and on-boarded so far, this plus the deployed staff gives access to c.1,000 swabbers.

Contact Tracing

- We will have recruited c. 798 staff to support contact tracing work and are continuing to recruit to build the service further and replace leavers. In addition, we have a further 37 staff, 23 from Revenue Commissioners and 14 from the HSE working as contact tracers. Since we are in peak surge escalation we also have approximately 100 defense force staff and 100 Environmental Health Officers supporting contact tracing.



Conclusion



Our median end to end turnaround time is **2.9 days for detected cases** and **2 days for not detected cases**.



In the last week, we have seen an increase in demand for community testing, by approximately **64%** from this time last week.



As of 5th of January, there are over **2,491,983** lab results completed to date.