HSE COVID-19

Testing & Contact Tracing Update
5th Of November 2020

1) Performance of the testing infrastructure

Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – Over 1,667,415 tests completed to date

1.8 days
Median end-to-end turn around time from referral to communication of result in community settings

1 day
Median
Swab taken to lab result

89,500+
Total Swabs

87,000+
Total number of laboratory tests completed this week

19,830+
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 27th of October – 2nd of November

Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 27th October- 2nd November.

Swabbing

- We took c.89,502 **swabs samples** this week – meeting all demand including serial testing.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately 48,205 taken in the community, 20,844 taken in hospitals and 20,453 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 testing centres in operation, with 4 pop up testing sites also in operation.
- Pop up centres are in operation in Carlow town, Donegal town, Sandyford in Dublin, South Douglas Street Centre in Cork
- Community testing requirements have decreased by **10%** over the last 6 weeks. A decrease has also been seen of 37**% in the last week**
- **92% of GP referrals result in swabs being taken the same day or next da**y.

Laboratories

- Laboratories processed **87,001 tests** across our network of 46 labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is **approximately 4.7%,** this is a **decrease of 1%** since this time last week.

Contact Tracing

- Contact tracing is carried out in HSE Galway, HSE Kells, HSE Cork, Defence forces Cork, Defence forces Athlone, Defence forces Dublin, Revenue Commissioners Limerick and UCD
- Our Contact Tracing teams across Public Health and CTCs completed over **19,839 phone calls** in the last week
- Close contacts average at 3.6 per person
- 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 7 day period from 27th of October- 2nd of November.

Turnaround

- Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is **1 day.**

- **Over 92% of people receive their test result in less than 48 hours from swabbing appointment – with 75% in less than 36 hours**

- All contact tracing is completed within **0.8 days (median). Our target here is 1 day.**

- In the last seven days, we have delivered a **median turnaround time from referral to communication of result in community settings of 1.8 days**

- It is important to note that approximately 95.3% of all tests that are processed are not detected and in the last 7 days, approximately 4.7% 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.

2) Testing Programmes

Serial Testing of All Staff in Residential Care Facilities (RCFs) for Older Persons

We are currently progressing through cycle 4 of the serial testing programme in RCFs.

To date;

574 facilities have been tested to date

265,886 tests have been completed

756 detected cases identified (0.28% detected rate)

Cycle 4;

569 facilities have been tested to date

46,527 tests have been completed

252 detected cases identified (0.54% detected rate)

Serial Testing of All Staff in food production facilities

We are currently progressing through cycle 4 of the serial testing programme in food production facilities

To date;

84 facilities have been tested

43,235 tests have been completed

201 detected cases identified (0.46% detected rate)

Cycle 2;

68 facilities have been tested to date

13,534 tests have been completed

80 detected cases identified (0.59% detected rate)

Serial Testing of staff and residents at direct provision sites

We have previously completed a full sweep of testing of staff and residents at direct provision sites

To date;

68 facilities have been tested to date

3,326 tests have been completed

18 detected cases identified (0.54% detected rate)

Monitoring COVID-19 in schools

School Facilities

- As of November 3rd, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed **in 657 schools.**

- **c.17,167 staff/students** have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.

- Of these, **444 detected cases** have been identified. This is a detected rate of 2.6%.

Childcare Facilities

- As of November 3rd, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed **in 174 childcare facilities.**

- **c.3,566 staff/students** have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.

- Of these, **190 detected cases** have been identified. This is a detected rate of 5.3%.

To note: When reporting on schools to date school facilities and childcare facilities had been grouped together, these types of services have now ben separated out for reporting purposes.

3) Demand Management

Community demand over the past 6 weeks

10% ⬇ Demand for testing in the community has decreased by **10%** in the last six weeks.

37% ⬇ Last week saw a c.**37%** decrease from the previous week in demand for testing.

In parallel the following testing programmes are ongoing which are not presented in the graph;
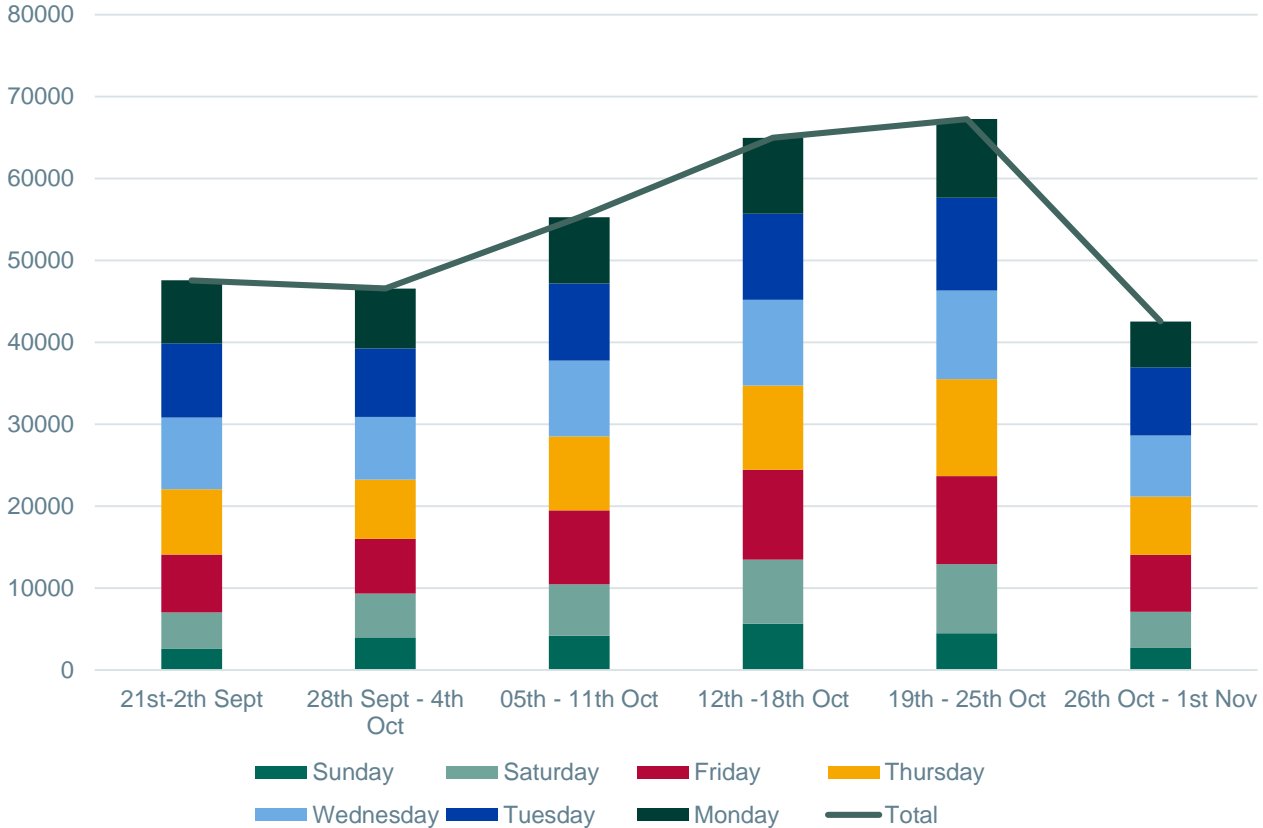
Tested staff in RCFs for Older Persons (tested over 15,464 staff from 28th of October- 1st of November)

Tested staff at food plants (tested over 3,962 food plant facility staff from 28th of October- 1st of November)

Trend in community demand

Legend: Sunday, Saturday, Friday, Thursday, Wednesday, Tuesday, Monday, Total

X-axis: 21st-2th Sept, 28th Sept - 4th Oct, 05th - 11th Oct, 12th -18th Oct, 19th - 25th Oct, 26th Oct - 1st Nov

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Contact tracing volumes over the past 6 weeks

We continue to monitor the number of calls which are made by our contact tracing centres each week.
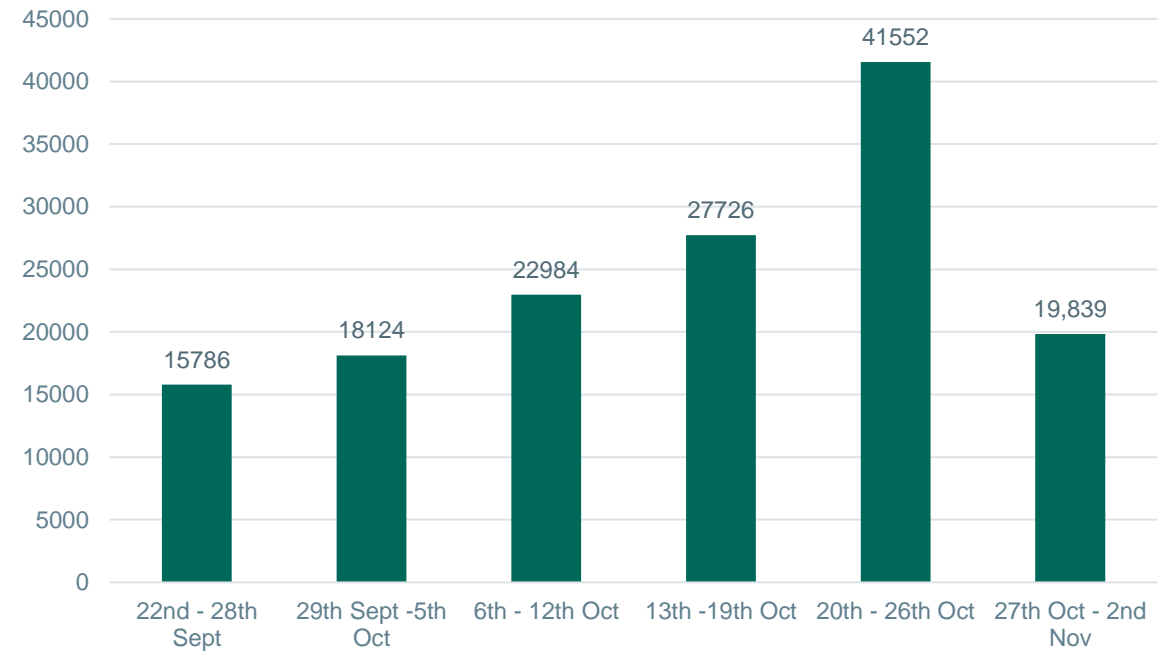
0.8 ⬆️ The volume of calls has increased by a factor of **0.8** in the last six weeks.

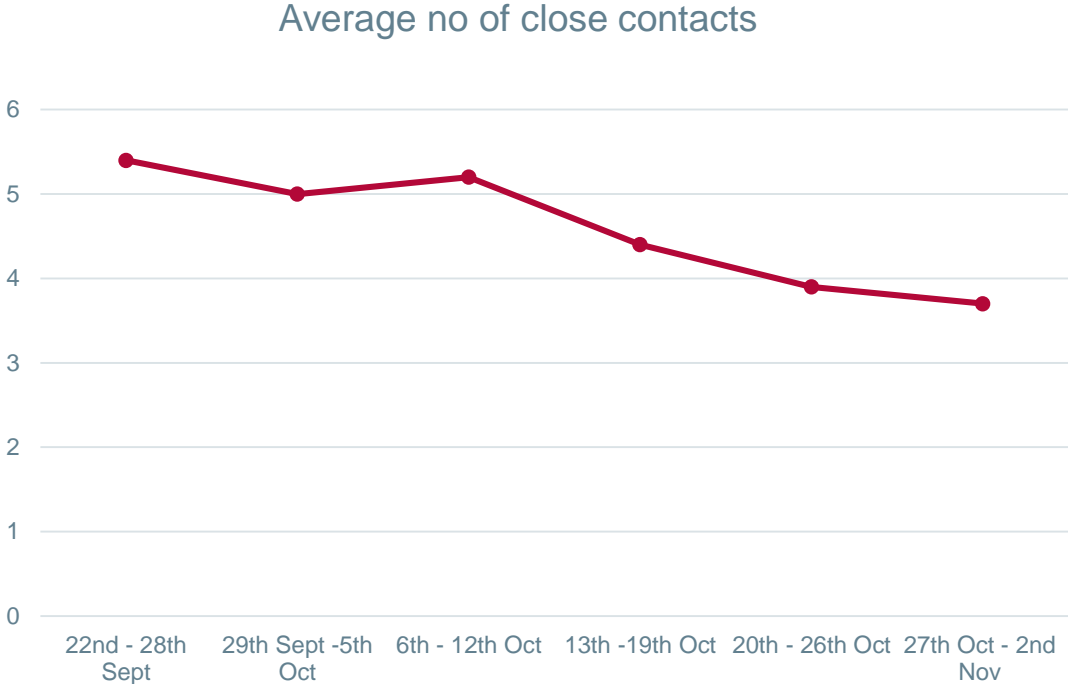**50%** ⬇️ Last week saw a c.**50%** decrease from the previous week in the number of contact tracing calls made.

Total Contact tracing calls

Week	Calls
22nd - 28th Sept	15786
29th Sept -5th Oct	18124
6th - 12th Oct	22984
13th -19th Oct	27726
20th - 26th Oct	41552
27th Oct - 2nd Nov	19,839

Close contacts Trend
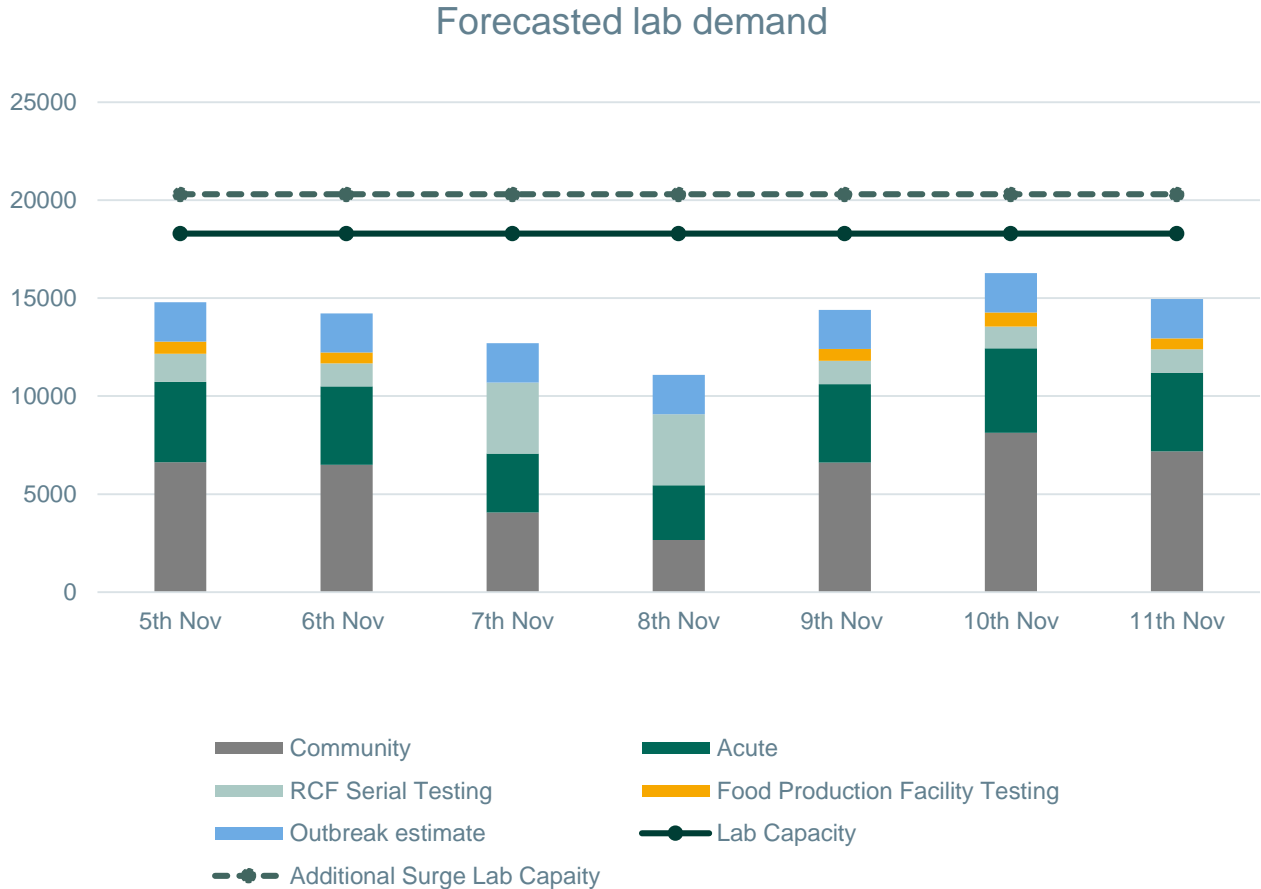
Average number of close contacts trend

- Six weeks ago, the average number of close contacts was approximately 5.5 close contacts.

- This week we continue to see a slight drop in the average number of close contacts, on average those who have received a detected COVID 19 result have had 3.7 close contacts.

Average no of close contacts

Forecast Lab Demand

- Over the past week, the community demand for testing has dropped significantly. There is no clear trend for current demand for community testing nor is it clear what impact level 5 restrictions will have as of yet. For the purpose of this projection it is forecasted that community demand will remain the same.

- 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.

Forecasted lab demand

Legend:
- Community
- Acute
- RCF Serial Testing
- Food Production Facility Testing
- Outbreak estimate
- Lab Capacity
- Additional Surge Lab Capaity

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Interpreting the latest trends

Decreasing trends

- From monitoring our test and trace data, we can see a decrease in a number of test and trace trends.

- We must exercise caution when interpreting these, we have seen that as the country has opened up previously the demand for our test and trace services, detected rate and number of close contacts has risen.

Planning ahead – (staffing)

- The HSE is using this time to focus efforts on ramping up resources across our test and trace system.

- By the end of this week a total of 320 new people will have been onboarded to date to carry out swabbing activities at our community testing sites. This is in additional to the 850 staff already deployed to swabbing.

- By the end of this week, we will have 420 new contact tracers onboarded. A further 70 contact tracers are expected to be onboarded next week. This is in additional to the staff we already have assigned to the contact tracing service.

- All of these new staff form part of our dedicated testing and tracing workforce

4) Building agility into the test and trace system

Additional supports to enhance schools testing pathway

The HSE is working closely with the Department of Education in order to continue to strengthen the schools testing pathway.
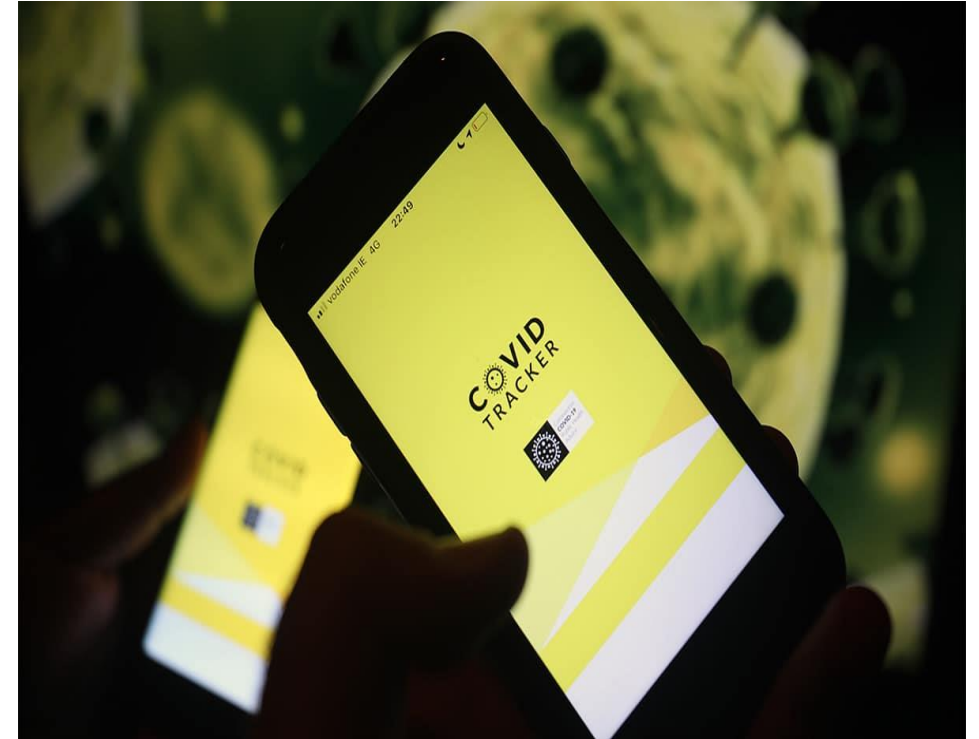
These enhancements include the following;

1. A dedicated phone line for school Principals to contact public health teams with any questions/ queries
2. Increased resourcing of the schools testing teams in each Public Health Department
3. Close contact appointments associated with a school appointed as priority testing.

COVID App Tracker – latest release

- The COVID Tracker app currently has 1.32 million users and has sent close contact alerts to 8.2k people, allowing them to restrict their movements quickly and get receive access to testing.

- The latest release of the COVID tracker App has been launched with a new feature specifically developed for healthcare workers. The new feature allows the user to pause contact tracing for a period and will thereafter send you a reminder to switch the function back on.

- It is recommended that if a healthcare worker is wearing appropriate PPE when providing care to patient that this feature is paused. Using this functionality to pause contact tracing will ensure that healthcare workers don't receive close contact notifications for periods of time when they are wearing appropriate PPE.

[Read more about the COVID Tracker App here.](#)

Conclusion

- Our median turnaround time from referral to communication of result, for detected and not detected tests over the past seven days in community settings is **1.8 days**.

- In the last week, we have seen a decrease in demand for community testing, by approximately 37% from this time last week.

- We have reached over **1,667,415** lab results completed to date as of 2nd of November.

- We continue to build agility in our system to meet the increasing community demand, examples of this include a nationwide recruitment campaign for swabbers and contact tracers, standing up temporary swabbing sites and making process improvements to our end to end test and trace system.