

HSE COVID-19

**Testing & Contact Tracing Update
15th of October 2020**



1) Performance of the testing infrastructure



Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – Over 1,356,500 tests completed to date



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



1.2 days
Median Swab Taken to lab result



103,250+
Total Swabs



99,260+
Total number of laboratory tests completed this week



22,980+
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 6th October – Monday 12th October..

Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 6th October – 12th October.

Swabbing

- We took c.103,254 **swabs samples** this week – meeting all demand including serial testing.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately 64,137 taken in the community, 21,010 taken in hospitals and 18,107 taken as part of serial testing of staff in meat and food plants, residential care facilities and residents and staff in direct provision centres.
- In the last week, we have had 32 testing centres in operation, with 5 pop up testing sites also currently in operation.
- Community testing requirements have increased by **a factor of 1.9** over the last 6 weeks. An increase has also been seen of **19% in the last week**
- **95% of GP referrals result in swabs being taken the same day or next day.**

Laboratories

- Laboratories processed **99,269 tests** across our network of 46 labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is **approximately 5.5%**, this is an increase of 1.6% detected since this time last week.
- Lab demand on a particular day this week was in excess of 16,500 tests.

Contact Tracing

- **There are contact tracing centres open in Galway, UCD and Limerick and Cork**
- Our Contact Tracing teams across Public Health and CTCs completed over **22,980 phone calls** in the last week
- Close contacts average at 5.2 per person – the large amount of contacts extends Call 3 effort significantly.
- 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 6 day date range from 6th – 12th October.

Turnaround

- Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is **1.2 days**
- All contact tracing is completed within **2 days (median)** – including all complex cases
- In the last seven days, we have delivered a **median turnaround time from referral to communication of result in community settings of 2.1 days.**
- It is important to note that approximately 94.5% of all tests that are processed are not detected and in the last 7 days, approximately 5.5% 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.

Other key messages

The 2 days required to complete all contact tracing is due to a number of factors;

- There is an increase in the number of calls being made, with an increase of 4,860 calls on last weeks volumes.
- Calls are becoming more complex as contact tracers are met with frustration from those receiving the close contact calls.
- It is important to note that some laboratory results are received late in the evening and informing patients of a detected result takes place the next morning.

2) Testing Programmes



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

Cycle 3 of the serial testing of healthcare workers within residential care facilities concludes on 13th of October.

In Cycle 3;

 **569 facilities** took part in serial testing

 **59,266 tests** were completed

 **226 detected cases identified** (0.38% detected rate).

Cycle 4 of the serial testing programme of all staff in RCFs for Older Persons commences on Wednesday, 14th of October.



Serial Testing in Food Production Facilities

The Serial Testing of food production facilities commenced on 21st of August and concluded on 9th of October.

In Cycle 1;



81 facilities took part in serial testing



30,109 tests were completed



127 detected cases identified (0.42% detected rate).

Cycle 2 of the food production serial testing programme commenced on 12th of October.



Monitoring COVID-19 in schools

Monitoring COVID-19 in school settings

- Public health have conducted risk assessments in response to these detected cases and as of October 13th, **testing is currently ongoing or has been completed in 364 schools.**
- **c.8,606 staff/students** have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.
- Of these, **172 detected cases** have been identified. This is a detected rate of 2%.

Community Referral Figures.

As well as the monitoring of COVID-19 in school settings, insights can also be driven from the community referral figures.

- Over the past 7 days, the **0-10 age group** represented **14.2% of all referrals** for a covid19 test.
- **Of this 0-10 age group, only 3% of these individuals received a detected COVID-19 result.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank public health officials, school staff, parents and students alike for taking all the necessary actions to ensure that schools are operating in a safe manner. The reopening of our schools has shown what can be done with collective effort and compliance with safety guidelines and measures.



3) Demand Management



Community demand over the past 6 weeks

1.9



Demand for testing in the community has increased by a factor of **1.9** in the last six weeks.

19%



Last week saw a c.**19%** increase from the previous week in demand for testing.

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

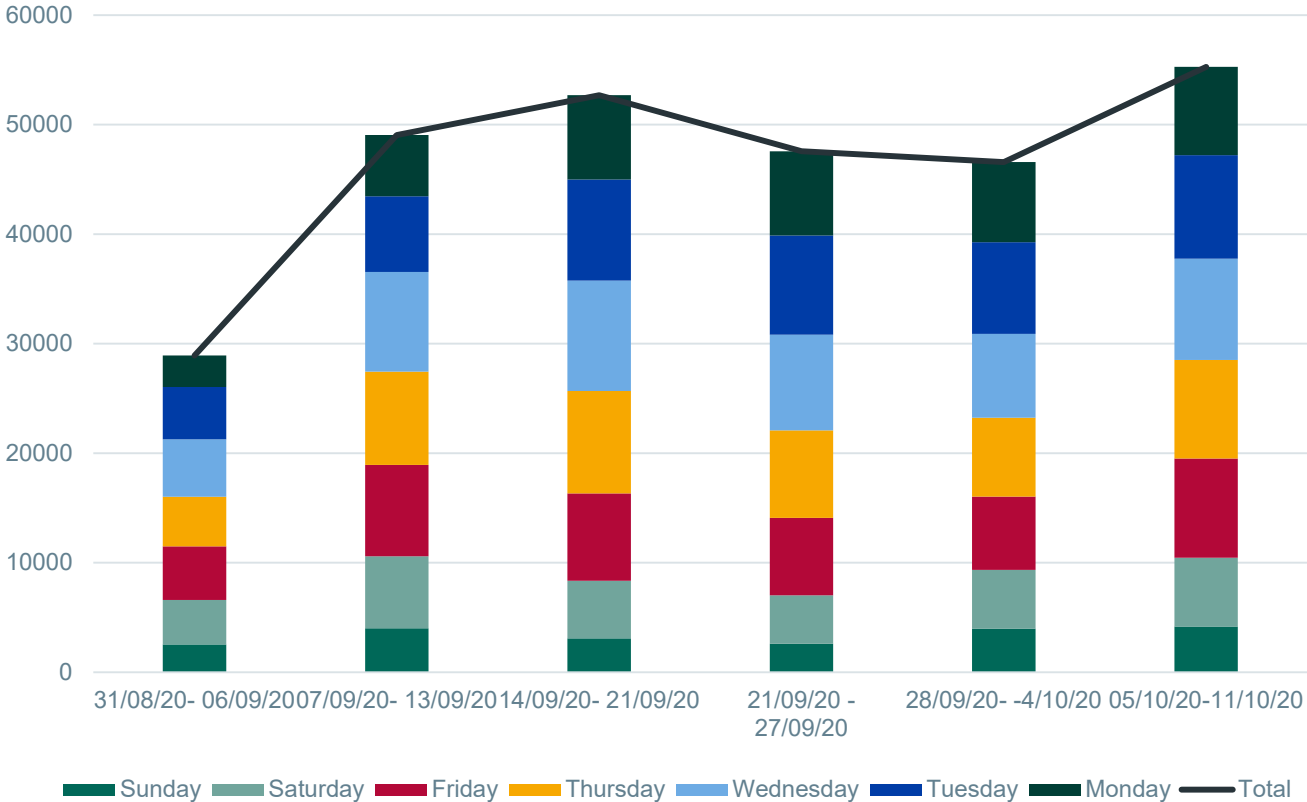


Tested staff in RCFs for Older Persons (tested over 14,247 staff from 5th – 11th of October)



Tested of staff at food plants (over 3,797 food plant facility staff from 5th – 11th of October)

Increase in Community Testing Demand



Contact tracing volumes over the past 6 weeks



The number of calls completed by our contact tracing centres have been steadily increasing over the past 6 weeks.

3.9



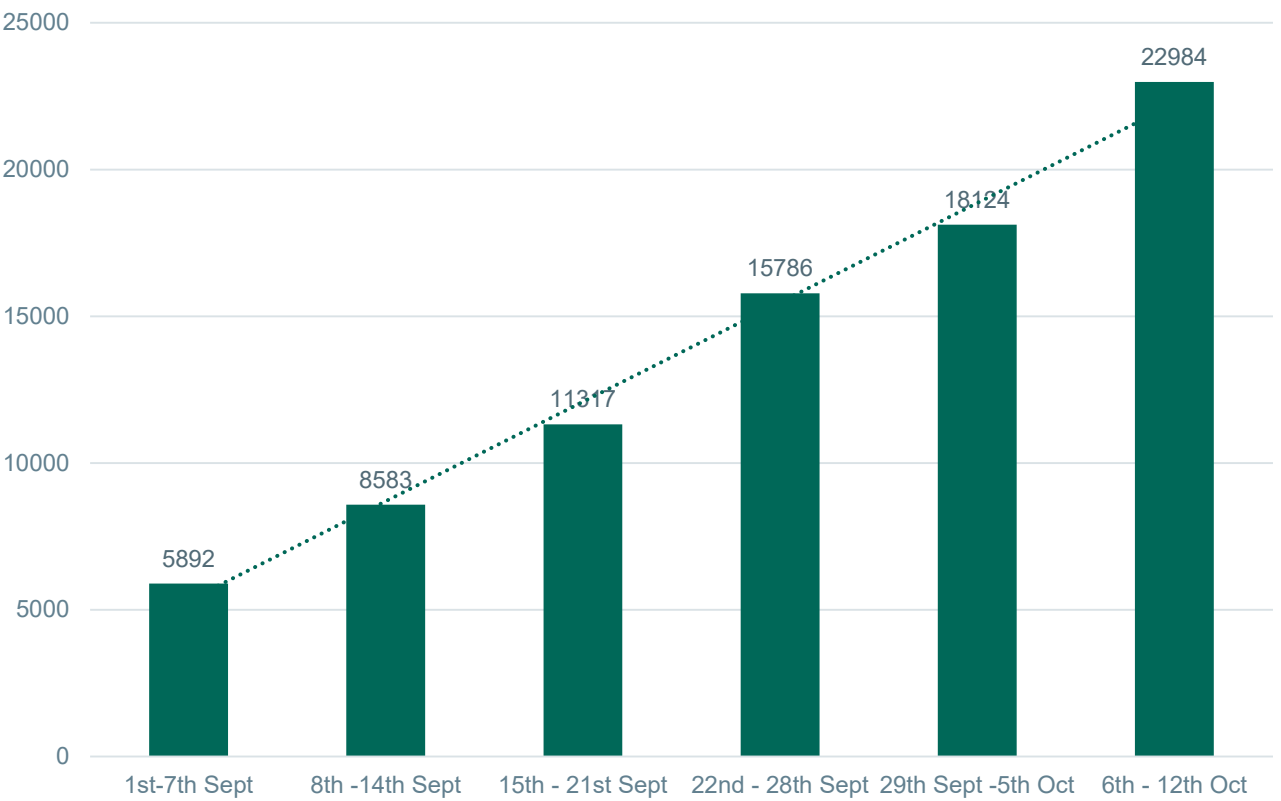
The volume of calls has increased by a factor of **3.9** in the last six weeks.

27%



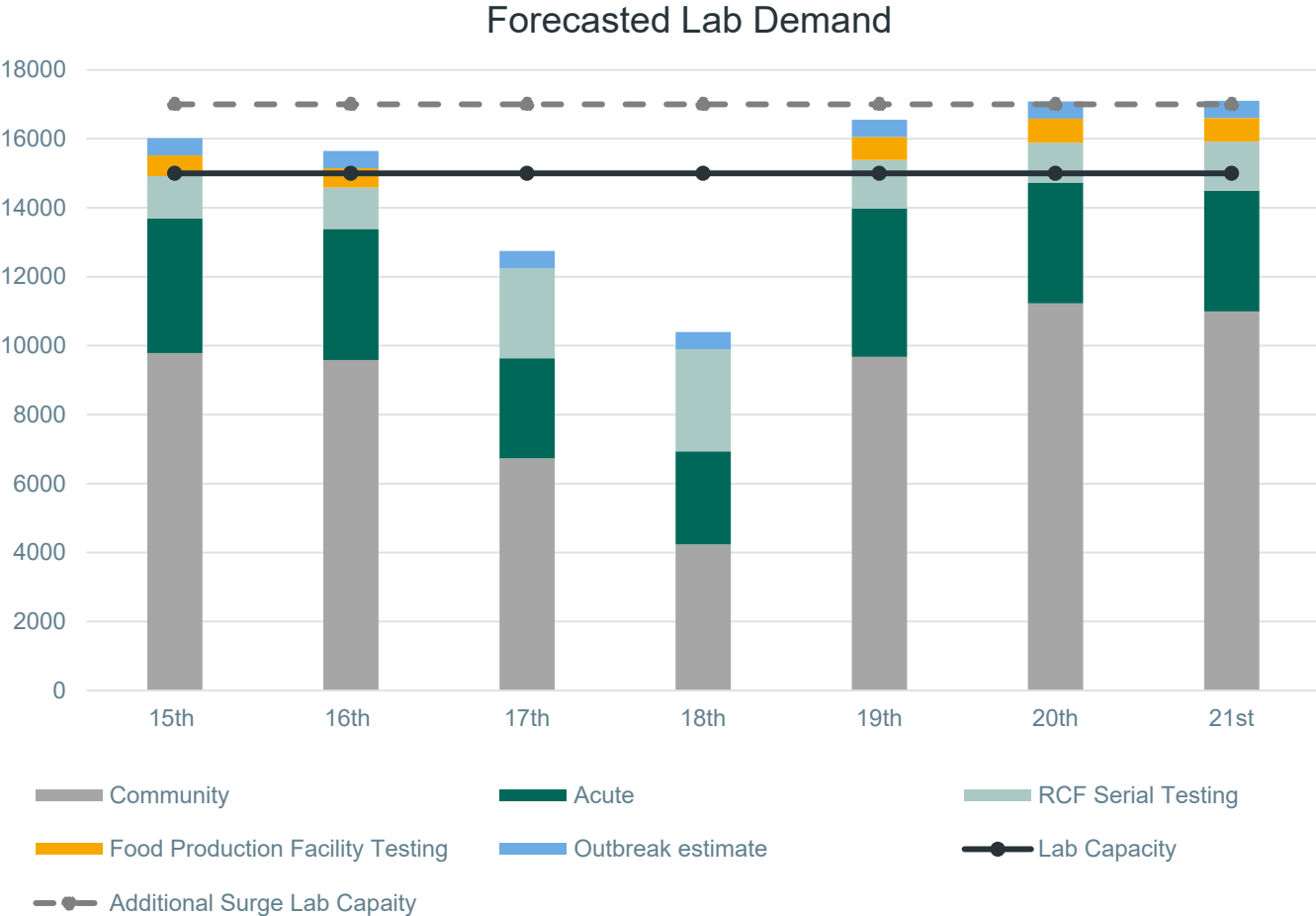
Last week saw a c.**27%** increase from the previous week in the number of contact tracing calls made.

Total Contact tracing calls



Forecast Lab Demand

- High testing volumes of testing are continued to be forecast for the next seven days.
- 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.



4) Building agility into the test and trace system



SMS notification for Detected COVID-19 cases

- To date, those who receive a detected test result for COVID-19 receive a call to communicate of this result.
- In ensure individuals are notified as quickly as possible of a detected result we are now sending detected results by SMS for COVID-19 results.
- This change in the results communication process is one of the ways we are continuously improving and optimising our end to end test and trace system.
- This service went live on Monday 12th of October.



How does it work?

- Where a valid mobile number is provided individuals will receive a text with their result.
- They will also receive a call from the national contact tracing centre who will provide clinical guidance and carry out contact tracing.
- Please remember it is extremely important for each person that is being referred for a test **provides their correct data including mobile number** to ensure they can be contacted with results and for contact tracing.



Test Centres and pop ups

- There are currently 32 static community testing centres in operations.
- There are an 5 pop-up centres in Carlow Town, St. Josephs Hospital, Limerick City, the Cleary Centre, Donegal Town, Sandyford, Dublin and St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork .
- We have utilised our pop-up service by responding to trends that we are seeing in certain counties, where there is a surge of COVID-19 detected cases and a need for a local testing service. We continue to monitor these trends.
- Individuals that arrive by bike or walking to our testing centres will be accommodated. We recommend that the public do not take public transport to attend test appointments.



Redeployment of staff

Effective redeployment of health service employees was a core element of the response in the HSE to Covid-19.

Testing in the community

- Covid-19 testing in the community has been undertaken by redeployed staff across all disciplines.
- A total of 866 staff from Community Healthcare Organisations are currently deployed to provide community testing.
- The HSE has recently commenced a recruitment campaign for staff to support community testing facilities for Covid-19.

Contact Tracing

- The HSE is creating standing capacity for contact tracing with 500 contact tracers currently being recruited. We scaled up contact tracing over the summer with over 300 staff now working in tracing.
- The recruitment of over 500 people for contact tracing commenced a few weeks ago.
- The first 400 people are now through the interview process and 65 new staff started on 6th October. A further 70 new staff will start this week and we expect to continue bringing in 60-70 new staff each week.



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 **2.1 days**.



We've have seen an increase in demand for testing, with a factor of 1.9 increase in community in the last six weeks.



We have reached over **1,356,500** lab results completed to date as of 14th of October.



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..

