

**HSE COVID-19**

**Testing & Contact Tracing Update  
22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2020**



# 1) Performance of the testing infrastructure



# Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – Over 1,468,284 tests completed to date



**2.2 days**

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



**1.1 days**

Median Swab Taken to lab result



**115,270+**

Total Swabs



**111,688**

Total number of laboratory tests completed this week



**27,720+**

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 13<sup>th</sup> October – Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October..



Seirbhís Sláinte  
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á Forbairt

Building a  
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# Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 13<sup>th</sup> October – 19<sup>th</sup> October.

## Swabbing

- We took c.115,271 **swabs samples** this week – meeting all demand including serial testing.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately 73,988 taken in the community, 21,521 taken in hospitals and 19,762 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 6 pop up testing sites also in operation.
- Community testing requirements have increased by **a factor of 1.3** over the last 6 weeks. An increase has also been seen of **18% in the last week**
- **94% of GP referrals result in swabs being taken the same day or next day.**

## Laboratories

- Laboratories processed **111,688 tests** across our network of 46 labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is **approximately 7.3%**, this is an increase of 1.8% detected since this time last week.
- Lab demand on a particular day this week was in excess of 17,000 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 **27,726 phone calls** in the last week
- Close contacts average at 4.4 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 7 day date range from 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> of October.

## Turnaround

- Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is **1.1 days**
- All contact tracing is completed within **3.8 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 2.2 days.**
- It is important to note that approximately 92.7% of all tests that are processed are not detected and in the last 7 days, approximately 7.3% 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 3.8 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 4,742 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 4 of the serial testing of all staff within residential care facilities commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> of October.

In Cycle 4;



**309 facilities** have been tested to date



**13,929** tests have been completed



**106 detected cases identified** (0.76% detected rate).



# Serial Testing in Food Production Facilities

Cycle 2 of the serial testing of staff within food processing facilities commenced on 12<sup>th</sup> of October.

In Cycle 2;



**23 facilities have** been tested to date



**4,746 tests** have been completed



**29 detected cases identified** (0.61% detected rate).





# Monitoring COVID-19 in schools

## Monitoring COVID-19 in school settings

- Public health have conducted risk assessments in response to detected cases linked to schools and as of October 20<sup>th</sup>, **testing is currently ongoing or has been completed in 544 schools.**
- **c.13,289 staff/students** have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.
- Of these, **355 detected cases** have been identified. This is a detected rate of 2%.
- There are ongoing improvements being implemented to minimise the time between a detected case being identified in a school setting and public health notification. We are working to ensure that the school is contacted at the earliest opportunity.



### 3) Demand Management



# Community demand over the past 6 weeks

1.3



Demand for testing in the community has increased by a factor of **1.3** in the last six weeks.

18%



Last week saw a c.**18%** increase from the previous week in demand for testing.

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

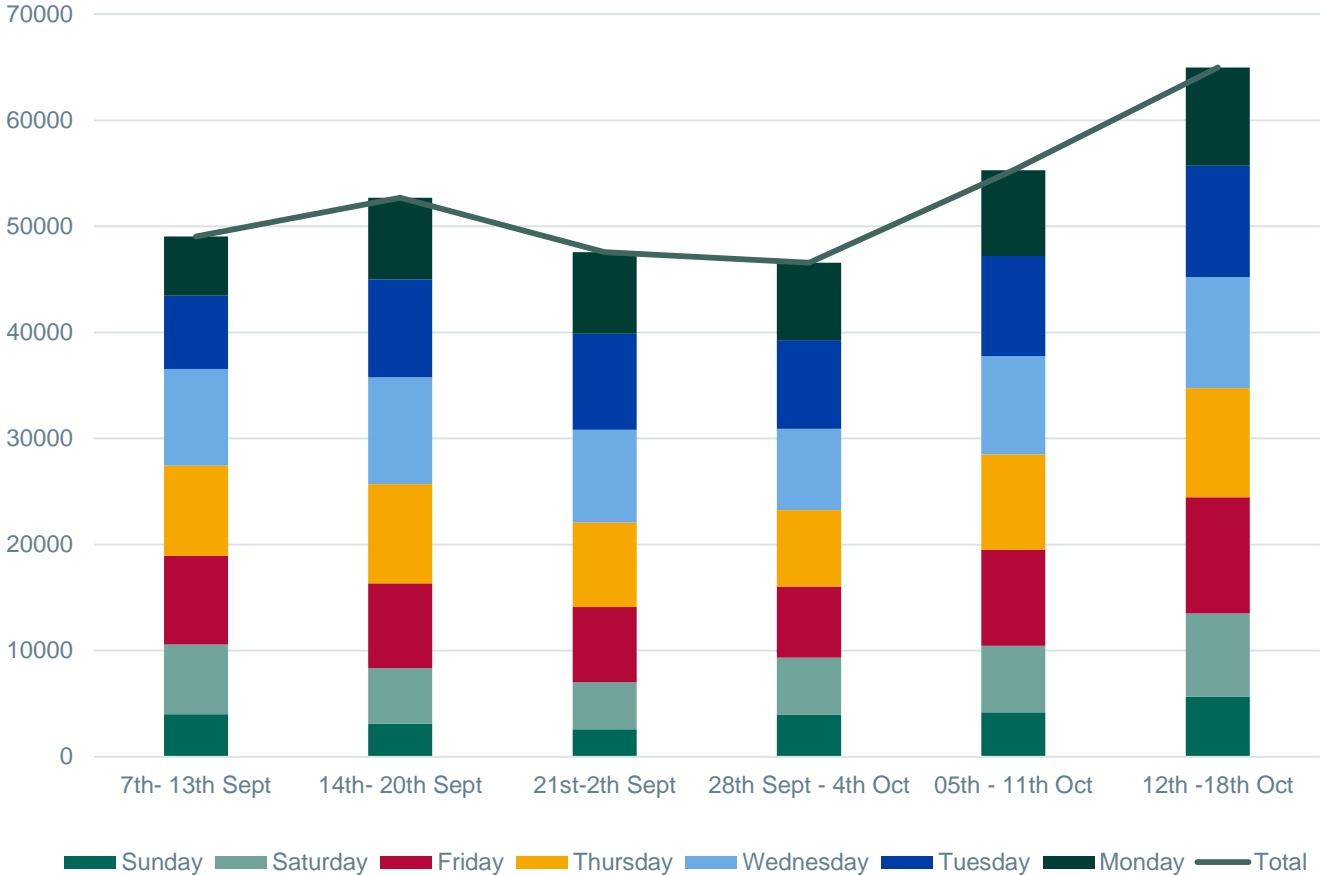


Tested staff in RCF's for Older Persons (tested over 15,697 staff from 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> of October)



Tested of staff at food plants (over 4,030 food plant facility staff from 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> of October)

Increase in Community Demand



# Contact tracing volumes over the past 6 weeks



Our National Contact Tracing centre is receiving an increasing number of calls each week and as the detected rate is also rising each week, this is putting significant pressure on our resources to meet demand

**3.2**



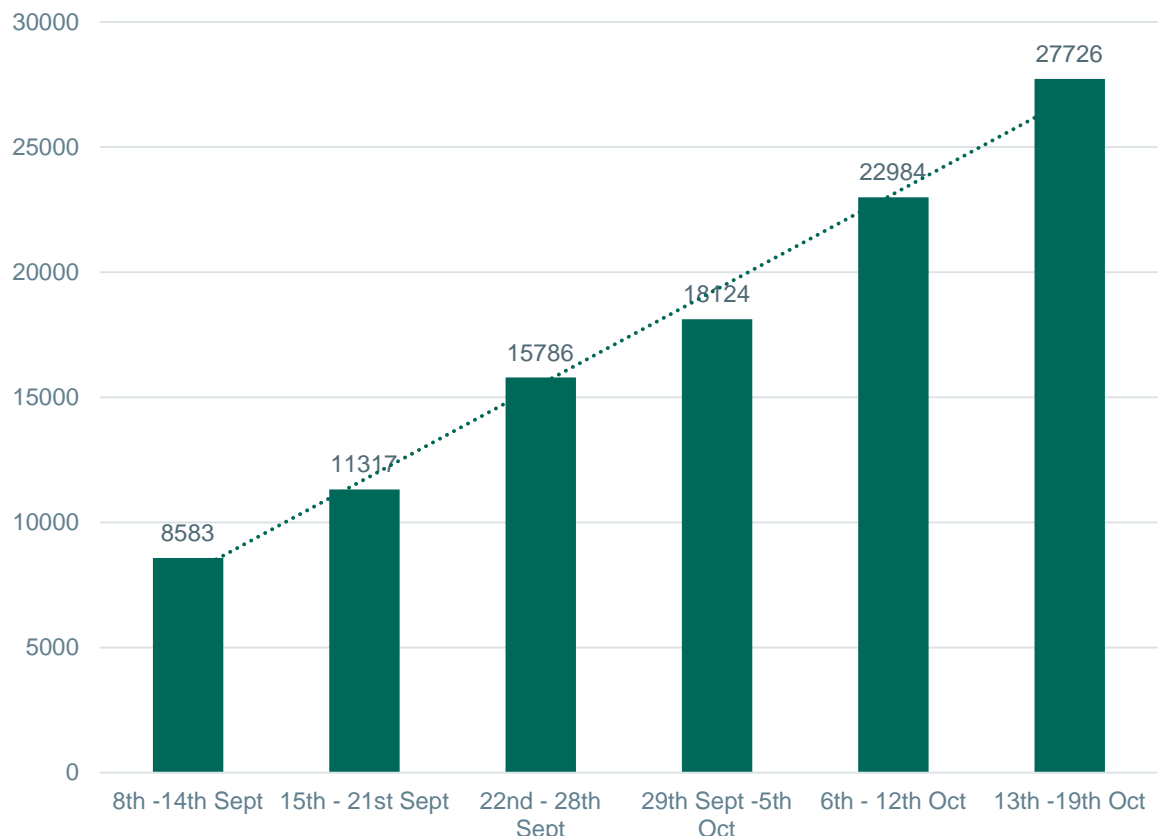
The volume of calls has increased by a factor of **3.2** in the last six weeks.

**21%**



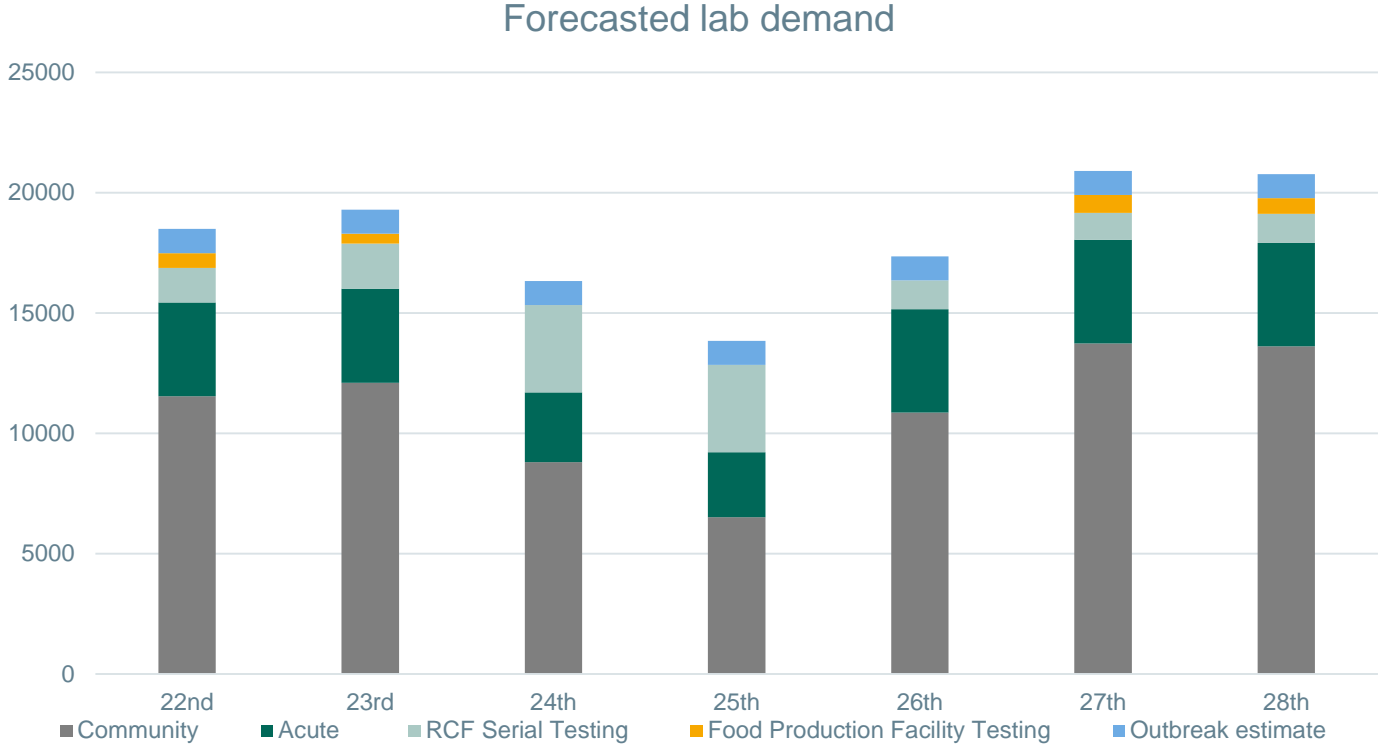
Last week saw a c.**21%** increase from the previous week in the number of contact tracing calls made.

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**



# Recruitment

## Community Swabbers

- Over 3,000 applied, over 1,000 through interviews
- 40 interviewed this week
- 130 onboarded – 90-100 per week going forward

## Contact Tracers

- 1,900 applied, 800 through interviews so far
- 93 interviewed this week
- 244 onboarded – 60-70 per week going forward
- 80 additional cadets for short term support
- Overall 551 in total (excluding cadets)



# SMS improving the test and trace process

## SMS for detected cases

Last week, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, SMS communication was introduced for those who were tested for COVID-19 and received a positive result.

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.

## SMS for close contacts

A new SMS will be issued from Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> of October to notify individuals if they are a close contact of an individual who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.





# Nasal swabbing for children being tested for COVID-19

## Simple COVID-19 Test for children

- The HSE has introduced a simpler COVID-19 test for children. Children who require a test will be given a nasal swab. They are no longer required to get their throats swabbed.
- This nasal swab will make the process quicker and easier and quicker for any child who is being tested.

## How will it work?

- The swab is a type of cotton bud and the tester will place it inside both nostrils to get a sample:
  - For children between six and twelve, the depth the swab goes in is 2cm.
  - From the ages of two to six, the swab will go about 1.5cm into the nostril.
  - For children under the age of two, the swab will only be placed 1cm deep.



# Increasing no. of detected COVID-19 and the Impact on contact tracing programme

- The recent high number of detected cases has had a significant impact on the demand on the contact tracing programme.
- There are a number of people who received a SMS informing them of a detected result between Friday and Monday last week who have not been contacted by the contact tracing teams.
- To ensure that contact tracers can meet the daily increasing demand the HSE has asked a number of these individuals by SMS to carry out their own contact tracing and refer their close contacts to their GP for a COVID test.
- Close contacts have two days to contact their GP/doctor for a COVID-19 test, who are fully supportive of this initiative.



## Key messages to note

- This is a temporary, emergency measure.
- A long term solution is the recruitment campaign for additional contact tracing resources.

# Conclusion

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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 **2.2 days**.



We have seen an increase in demand for testing, with a factor of **1.3 increase** in community in the last six weeks.



We have reached over **1,468,280** lab results completed to date as of 20<sup>th</sup> 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 and making process improvements to our end to end test and trace system.

