

13th October 2020

Deputy David Cullinane
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 25319/20

Question: “To ask the Minister for Health the average Covid-19 test turnaround by county and nationally from general practitioner referral to communication of results for community testing in each week since 1 April to 14 September 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter”.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

I wish to advise that we do not have a regional breakdown of turnaround times. The vast majority of tests are processed in one laboratory. I can confirm that the current median end to end turnaround time for detected and not detected results from referral to communication of result is 2 days. We are continuing to keep sharp focus on end-to-end turnaround times, while recognising that some cases are increasingly complex in nature.

There are currently 37 testing centres in operation nationally, a combination of permanent Community Testing Centres and temporary “pop-up” testing centres. Currently all counties in Ireland have at least one testing centre with the exception of County Leitrim where a centre is currently being planned. Centres operate on an appointment only basis, providing appointments for people with suspected Covid-19 symptoms referred by their GP. In addition close contacts of positive cases are referred by the HSE Contact Tracing Team for Covid-19 testing in the centres.

The HSE Covid-19 Community Testing Service is committed to the timely provision of safe, accessible, quality swabbing services within the community setting. Over the past seven days, over 95% of all persons referred for testing were offered a test appointment on the same or next day.

I also wish to advise that the referral to swab turnaround times, swab to lab result, number of swabs taken and contact tracing calls and number of close contacts are published online and are accessible at the below link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/integrated-information-service-testing-and-contact-tracing-dashboard.html>

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,



Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead for Testing and Tracing