

5th Nov. 2021

Deputy Róisín Shortall,
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Issued via email to: roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie

PQ Number: 51973/21

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if he will report on the contact tracing which is currently taking place for Covid-19 cases; and the main findings in respect of the key settings in which transmission is taking place.

Dear Deputy Shortall,

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

In Autumn 2020, the HSE's Test & Trace Programme committed that the Contact Management Programme (CMP) would work to build a sustainable contact tracing service with a dedicated workforce to meet a demand of 1,500 daily cases and 6,000 close contacts (i.e. standing capacity). The HSE's CMP workforce is now highly skilled and agile, and the ongoing programme of IT developments has supported and delivered further efficiencies across the contact tracing system which includes the List your Contacts portal and the Request a Test portal.

The CMP has witnessed a sudden surge for its services throughout the month of October. To put it into context, between October 1st -7th, the CMP received an average of 1,347 positive test results per day from the laboratories. This figure doubled between October 25th – 31st to 2,697 per day and has further increased since that date.

With the continued easing of restrictions, and as sectors of the economy re-open, it is only natural that people begin to interact more within the community. Despite this, the average number of close contacts reported by index cases has remained consistent at approximately 2.3 throughout October.

In relation to the to key settings where transmission is taking place, The Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) publish a weekly COVID-19 outbreak report which includes the key settings where transmission of COVID-19 has been identified. I have included below the link to the recent reports for your information:

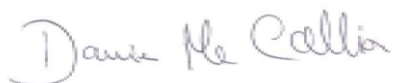
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/surveillance/covid-19outbreaksclustersinireland/>

The data extracted from our infectious disease system (CIDR) on November 2nd 2021, reported there were 2,966 COVID-19 outbreaks notified from 21st June 2021 to October 30th 2021 (weeks 26-43, wave 4). In the attached Appendix, Table 1 outlines the most frequently occurring outbreak categories and associated case numbers reported. The eight main outbreak locations presented in Table 1 account for 50% of all notified outbreaks and 60% of COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks in wave 4. Table 2 outlines the number of outbreaks and associated cases by outbreak category and week of notification.

It is important to note that outbreaks in certain categories are more difficult to identify e.g. outbreaks in the retail sector are confined to outbreaks among staff. In addition, due to the current volume of cases, Public Health colleagues are prioritising certain categories of outbreaks including healthcare settings, special education settings and outbreaks in other vulnerable groups. Therefore, there may be under-reporting in some other outbreak categories.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Damien McCallion
National Director
National Lead Test & Trace and Vaccination Programme

Appendix: HPSC Covid-19 Outbreak/ Clusters Interim Weekly Report

Table 1: Most frequently occurring COVID-19 outbreak locations in wave 4, 21/06/2021-30/10/2021

Location	Total	Number of confirmed cases
Workplace	395	2200
School	293	1667
Childcare facility	195	925
Retail outlet	142	428
Residential institution	133	636
Nursing home	114	1842
Acute Hospital	114	725
Social gathering	107	530

Table 2: Total number of newly notified COVID-19 outbreaks and associated cases in Ireland by outbreak location, week 26 to week 43 2021 (wave 4)

Outbreak location category	Location	Sub-Location	Week 26-35	Week 36	Week 37	Week 38	Week 39	Week 40	Week 41	Week 42	Week 43	Total	Number of confirmed cases	Range in number of confirmed cases	
Healthcare and residential	Nursing home	n/a	47	4	5	12	5	13	10	12	6	114	1842	1-82	
	Community hospital/Long-stay unit	n/a	5	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	17	115	2-27	
	Acute Hospital	n/a	52	9	4	8	7	10	13	5	6	114	725	0-36	
	Residential institution	Total residential institution	49	10	9	4	16	5	13	20	7	133	636	0-48	
		Addiction services	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	2-3
		Centre for disabilities	23	7	5	3	9	2	11	13	6	79	363	0-29	
		Centre for older people	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	6-6
		Children's/TUSLA residential centre	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	1	14	48	2-9	
		Direct Provision Centre	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	70	2-48	
		Homeless facility	4	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	9	48	2-11	
		Mental Health facility	4	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	8	30	2-7	
		Prison	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	6	3-3	
		Women/children's refuge	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	<5	<5	
		Not specified/Other	2	2	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	9	58	2-14	
	Other healthcare service	n/a	17	5	2	3	4	7	9	5	6	58	164	1-10	
Workplace	Workplace	Total workplace	237	15	12	21	22	18	33	19	18	395	2200	0-227	
		Meat/poultry production and processing	19	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	0	27	783	0-227	
		Other food production and processing	29	3	1	4	1	3	7	3	2	53	298	1-30	
		Construction	56	3	3	6	6	4	3	1	2	84	311	0-20	
		Other workplace type	101	6	8	8	9	8	19	10	11	180	647	0-21	
		Not specified/Unknown/Other	32	2	0	1	5	2	3	3	3	51	161	1-12	
Education	School	Total school	51	49	99	51	10	2	15	11	5	293	1667	0-36	
		Primary	50	40	87	45	9	2	6	7	4	250	1506	0-36	
		Post-primary	1	6	11	3	0	0	1	2	1	25	92	0-16	
		Special education	0	3	1	3	0	0	7	2	0	16	67	2-15	
		Not specified/Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	<5	<5	
		Childcare facility	n/a	138	22	9	9	1	2	10	3	1	195	925	1-25
	University/College	n/a	0	3	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	9	51	2-12	

Outbreak location category	Location	Sub-Location	Week 26-35	Week 36	Week 37	Week 38	Week 39	Week 40	Week 41	Week 42	Week 43	Total	Number of confirmed cases	Range in number of confirmed cases
Travel	Travel related	n/a	41	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	3	51	196	1-14
Hospitality	Restaurant/Café	n/a	85	4	1	2	0	1	3	3	1	100	339	0-11
	Hotel	n/a	67	3	1	0	1	0	0	4	4	80	414	1-61
	Guesthouse/B&B	n/a	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	9	46	1-9
Social and recreational	Public house	n/a	49	5	0	1	1	3	2	1	4	66	278	0-17
	Religious/Other ceremony	n/a	26	3	2	4	2	2	2	3	3	47	348	2-28
	Social gathering	n/a	84	4	2	4	1	3	3	2	4	107	530	0-20
	Sporting activity/Fitness	n/a	40	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	48	199	0-16
Community and Extended family	Other recreation activity	n/a	18	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	22	166	0-47
	Community outbreak	n/a	33	0	2	3	1	9	0	2	0	50	450	0-43
Personal grooming, retail and transport	Extended family	n/a	42	7	4	10	9	12	9	7	3	103	761	1-53
	Transport	n/a	17	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	23	65	1-6
Additional outbreak locations	Personal grooming service	n/a	19	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	25	64	0-7
	Retail outlet	n/a	101	9	6	2	6	1	5	4	8	142	428	0-11
	Private house	n/a	236	42	60	64	107	82	63	56	43	753	2332	1-13
	Not specified/Other	n/a	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	12	63	1-30
Total			1469	200	228	203	203	173	197	165	128	2966	15004	0-227

Please note that the data provided above for Table 1 and 2 are as reported on the national Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting system (CIDR) at the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) as of November 2nd 2021 at 8.30am. The data presented relate to COVID-19 cases notified to the HPSC between 4th July 2021 up to midnight on October 30th 2021. CIDR is a dynamic system and case details may be updated at any time. Therefore, the data described here may differ from previously reported data and data reported for the same time period in the future.