

HSE COVID-19

**Testing & Contact Tracing Update
19th Of November 2020**



1) Performance of the testing infrastructure



Testing and Contact Tracing Headlines – Over 1,821,100 tests completed to date



1.7 days
Median turn around time from referral to communication of result in community settings



1.1 days
Median Swab Taken to lab result



77,880+
Total Swabs



75,370+
Total number of laboratory tests completed this week



12,280+
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 10th – 16th of November.

Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (1/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 10th – 16th of November.

Swabbing

- c.77,888 **swabs samples** this week – meeting all demand including serial testing.
- This total swabbing figure includes approximately 34,896 taken in the community, 23,465 taken in hospitals and 19,527 taken as part of serial testing of staff in food plants and healthcare workers in nursing homes.
- In the last week, we have had 33 testing centres in operation, with 5 pop up testing sites also in operation.
- Pop up centres are in operation in Carlow town, Donegal town, Charlestown in Finglas, South Douglas Street Centre in Cork.
- Community testing demand have decreased by **47%** over the last 6 weeks. A decrease has also been seen of **2% in the last week**.
- **92% of GP referrals result in swabs being taken the same day or next day.**

Laboratories

- Laboratories processed **75,375 tests** across our network of 46 labs.
- The average detected rate over the past week is **approximately 4%**, this is an increase of 0.1% since this time last week.

Contact Tracing

- Contact tracing is carried out in Galway (HSE), Limerick (HSE and Revenue), Cork (HSE), Dublin (Sandyford), Dublin (UCD), Parkgate street (Dublin), Kells (HSE). We have a new Dublin site where most Dublin staff will move too once it is open.
- Our Contact Tracing teams across Public Health and CTCs completed over **12,288 phone calls** in the last week.
- Close contacts average at 3.6 per person.

Performance of the Testing Infrastructure (2/2)

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the 7 day date range from 10th – 16th of November.

Turnaround

- Swab to lab result for community and acute settings is **1.1 days**.
- All contact tracing is completed within **0.7 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 is 1.6 for not detected cases and 1.8 for detected cases**
- **End to end for a detected case in the community is 2.2 days (to the end of contact tracing)**
- It is important to note that approximately 96% of all tests that are processed are not detected and in the last 7 days, approximately 4% 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 Nursing Homes

Cycle 5 of serial testing has commenced on 11th of November and will run for four weeks.

Cycle 5 to date;



275 facilities have been tested



13,429 tests have been completed



108 detected cases identified (0.80% detected rate).



Serial Testing of All Staff in food production facilities

Cycle 3 of serial food production facilities has commenced on 9th of November and will run across four weeks.

Cycle 3 to date;



26 facilities have been tested



4,211 tests have been completed



40 detected cases identified (0.95% detected rate).



Monitoring COVID-19 in schools

School and Childcare Facilities

- As of November 17th, testing is currently ongoing or has been completed **in 941 facilities**. This includes schools and childcare facilities.
- **c.23,172 staff/students** have been identified and are undergoing Day 0 and/or Day 7 testing.
- Of these, **717 detected cases** have been identified. This is a detected rate of 3%.



Testing of mink farms

COVID-19 Variant discovered in mink farms

- In response to the variant of COVID-19 discovered in mink farms in other countries, the HSE has commenced testing of workers and household contacts on these farms.
- Testing will be on a once weekly basis. During the first week of testing at Mink farms, there were **no detected results**.
- There has been engagement and co-ordination on this testing initiative with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).



3) Test and Trace Trends



Test and Trace Trends

Although we have seen a number of our key metrics on a downward trajectory, over the past two weeks we have seen the downward trajectory beginning to level out or increase. This is something that the HSE is paying close attention to and continuing to monitor the demand on the test and trace system. Over the past two weeks the following metrics have levelled out somewhat or increased.



Community Demand

Community Demand has been circa 30,000 tests over the past two weeks



Contact Tracing Calls

Contact tracing calls completed in the past two weeks have been circa 12,000-13,000



Close Contacts

Over the past two weeks, close contacts have been 3.7- 3.6 close contacts per person



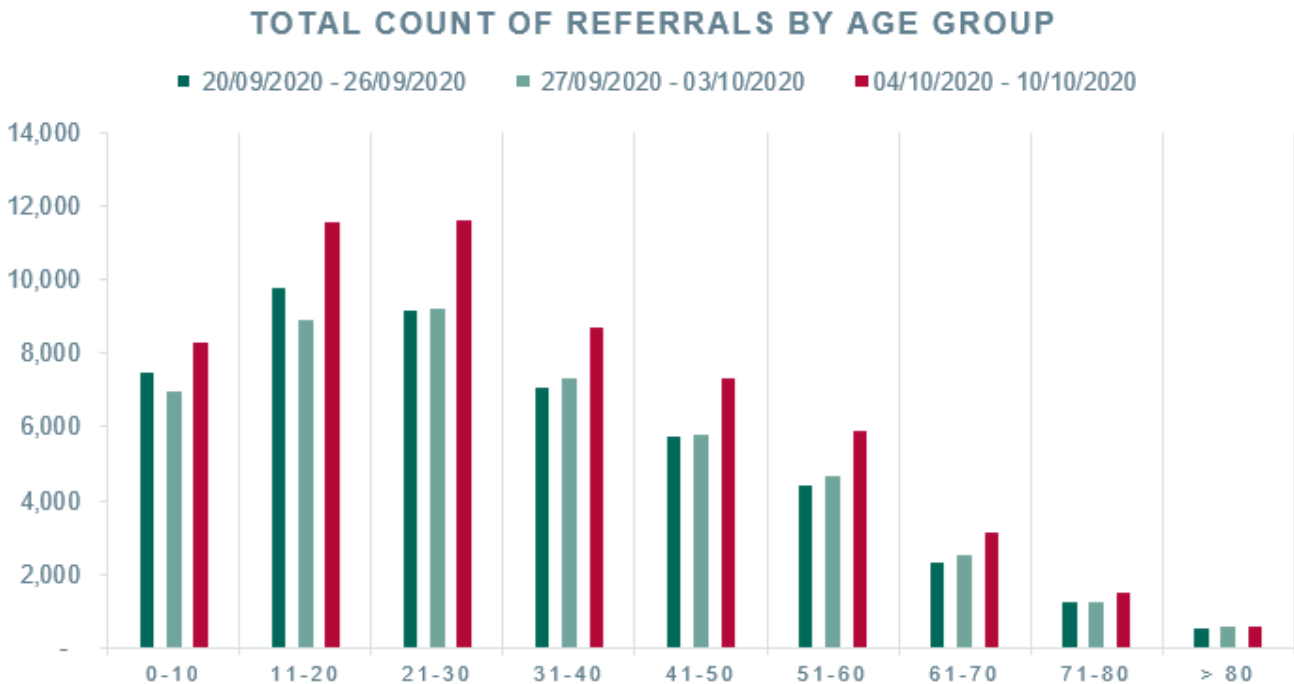
Positivity Rate

Positivity rate has increased by 0.1% in the last week

Total count of referrals by age group

Referrals by Age Group

- The graph shows referrals by age group over the past three weeks.
- This graph gives an insight into the demand for testing of symptomatic individuals and the age profile of same.
- In the last week, the age groups with the highest percentage of referrals were;
 - the **11-20 age group**, which made up **17.2%** of all referrals.
 - the **21-30 age group** which made up **16.7 %** of all referrals.



Community demand over the past 6 weeks

47%



Demand for testing in the community has decreased by 47% in the last six weeks.

2%



Last week saw a c.2% decrease from the previous week in demand for testing.

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

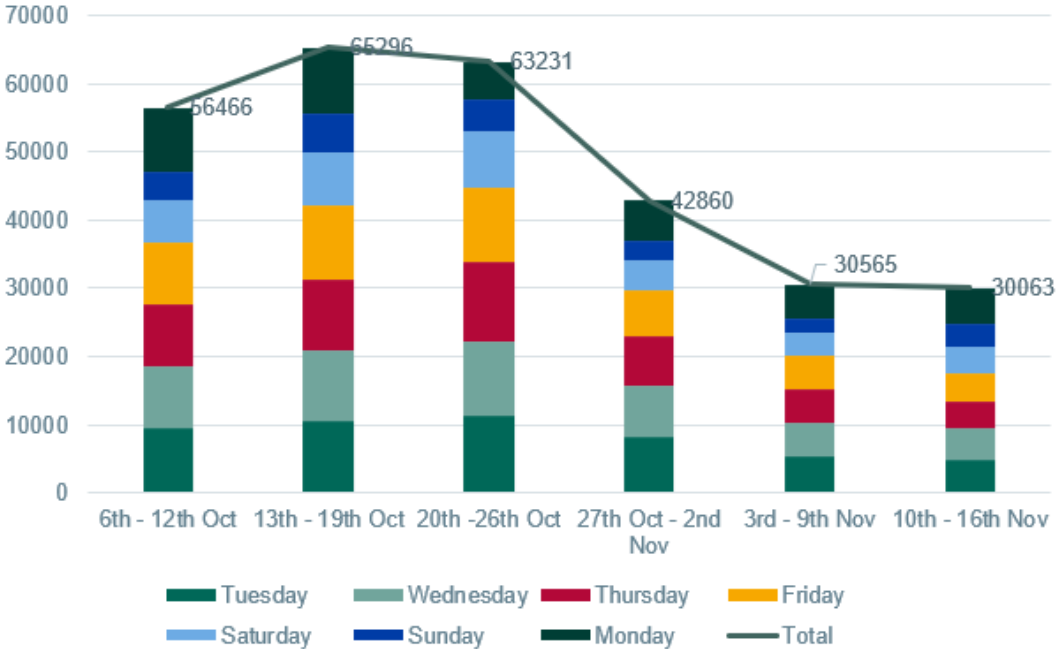


Tested staff in Nursing Homes (tested over 15,417 staff from 10th – 16th of November).



Tested staff at food plants (tested over 4,110 food plant facility staff from 10th – 16th of November).

Community Testing Demand



Contact tracing volumes over the past 6 weeks



46%

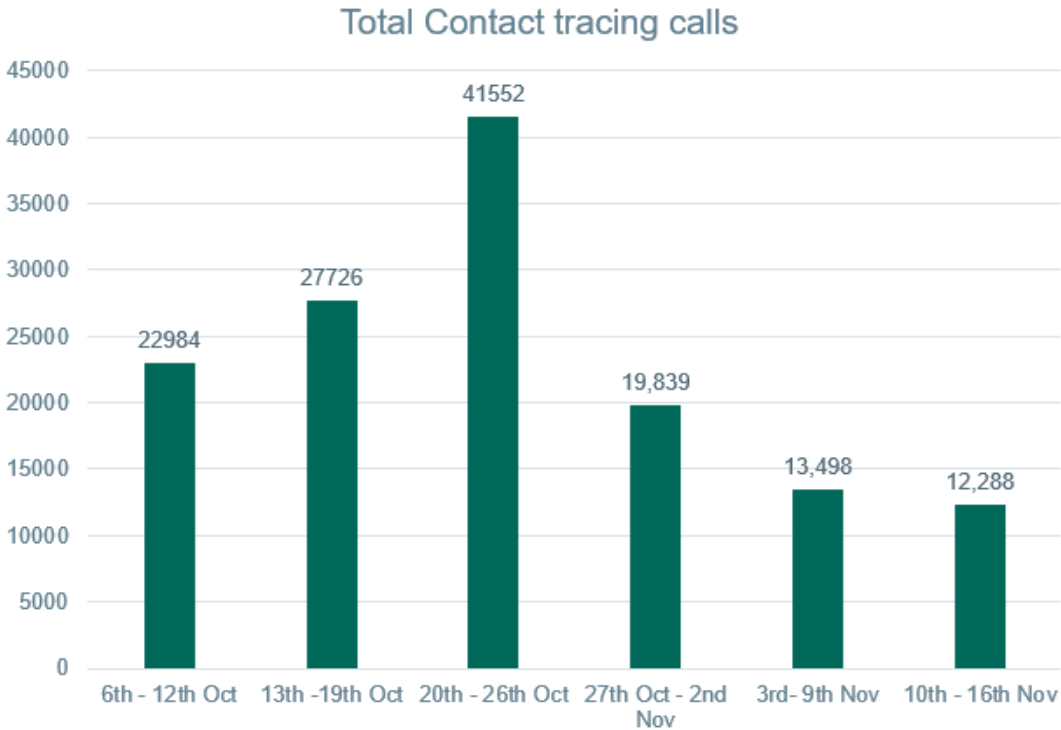


The volume of calls has decreased by 46% since where it was 6 weeks ago.

8%



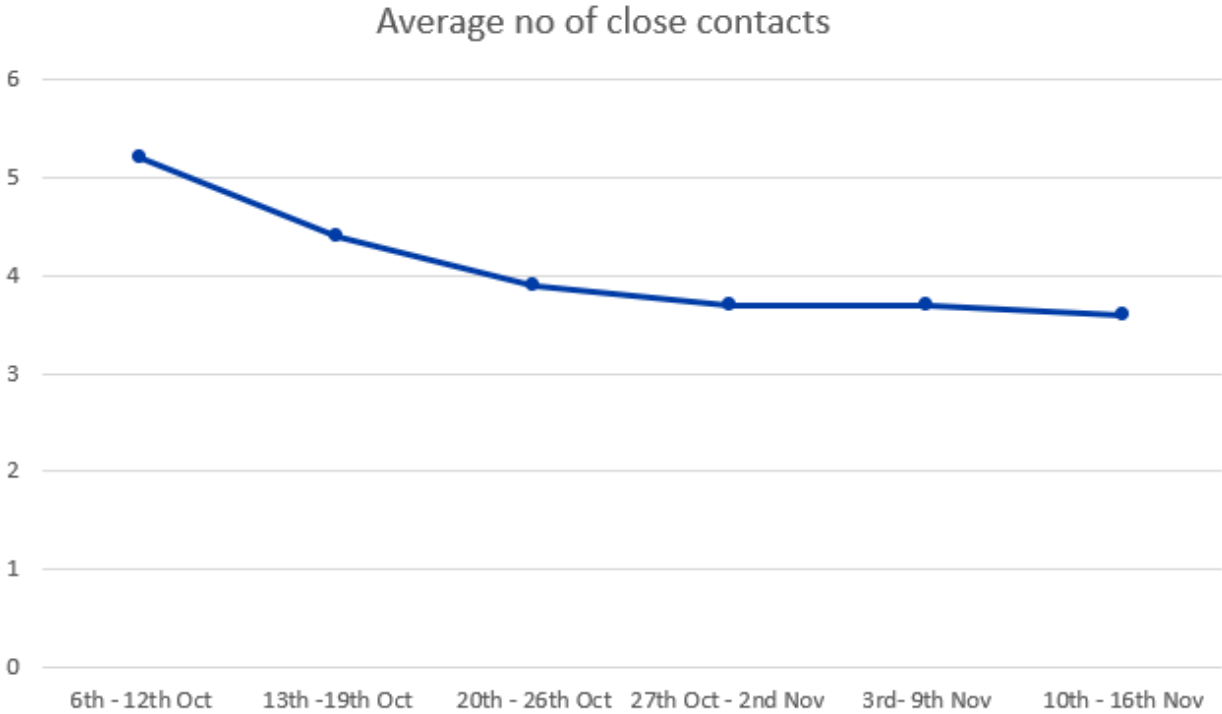
Last week saw a c.8% decrease from the previous week in the number of contact tracing calls made.



Close contacts Trend

Average number of close contacts trend

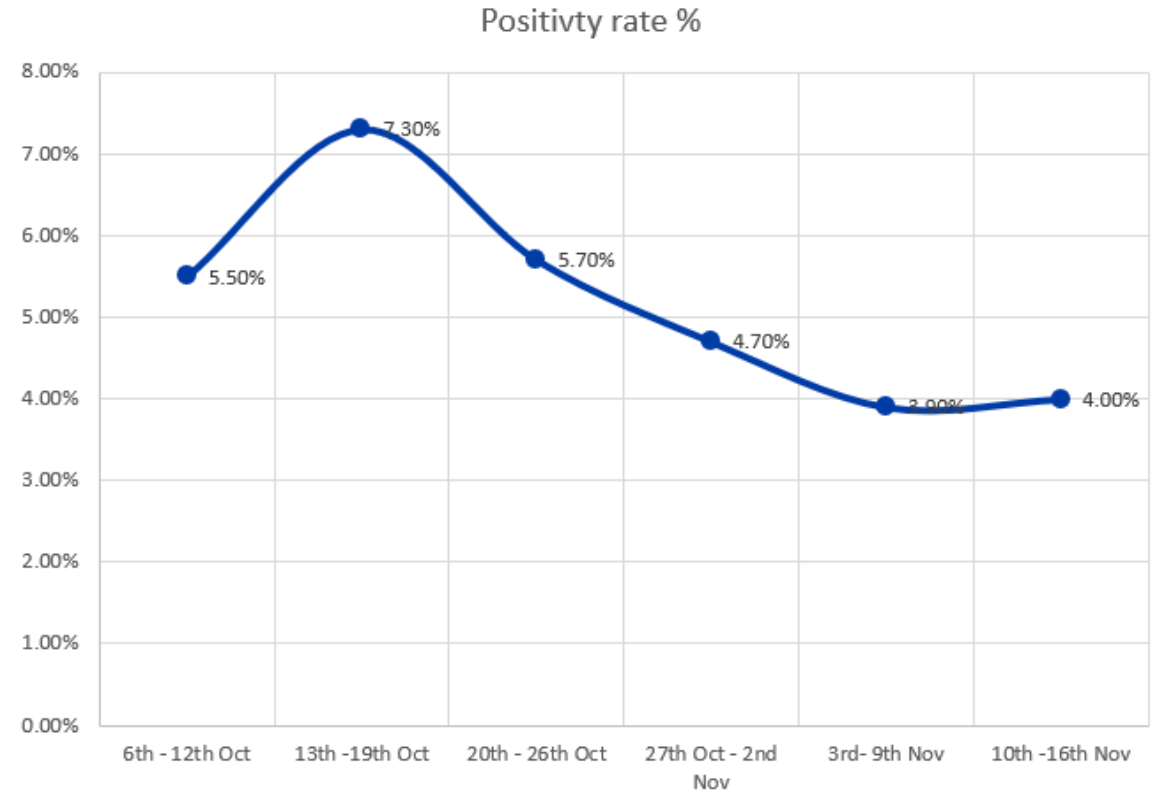
- Six weeks ago, the average number of close contacts was over 5 close contacts.
- This week the average number of **close contacts per person is 3.6**, this is a minor decrease from last week, where close contacts were 3.7 per person.



Positivity Trend

Positivity rate

- Four weeks ago, we saw a high positivity rate of 7.3%.
- This week **the positivity rate is 4%**, a marginal increase from the previous week, where the positivity rate was 3.9%.
- This is the first time in three weeks that the positivity rate has increased.



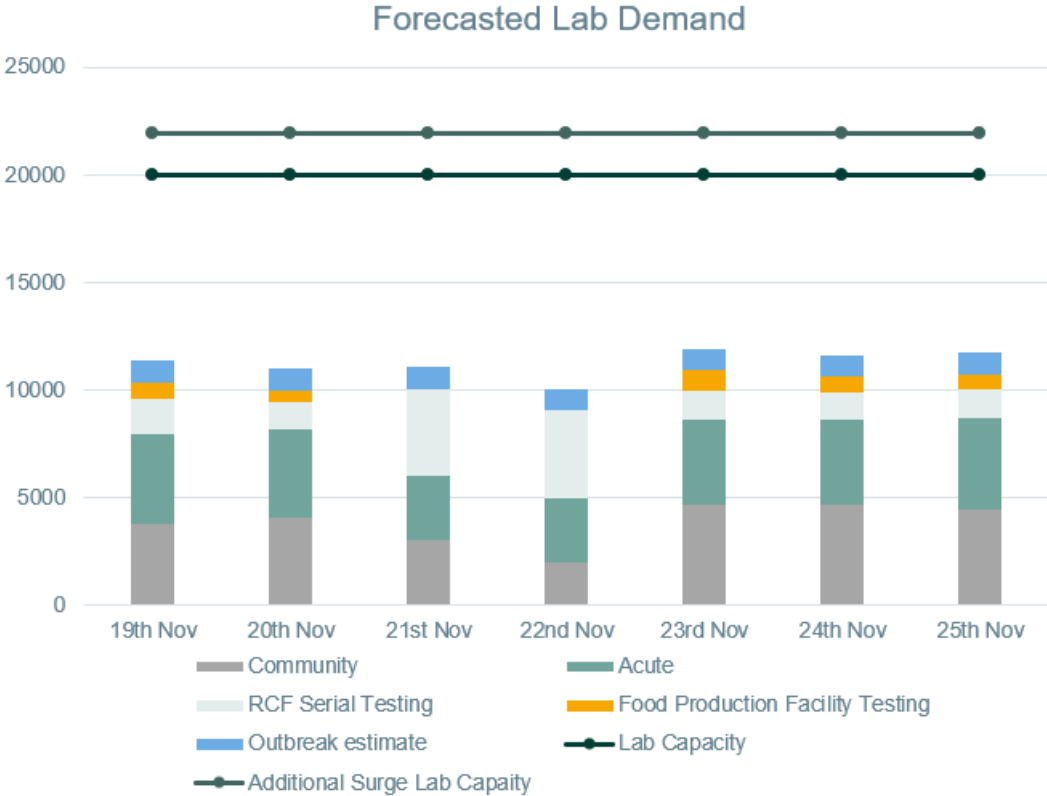
Forecast Lab Demand

The community demand for testing has decreased for three consecutive weeks. Despite this decrease in demand, we have ensured that our system has sufficient testing capacity, with the ability to complete up to 140,000 tests a week.

We are continuously monitoring forecasted testing demand, which changes hourly, and implementing all possible mitigations to ensure end to end turnaround time remains within our target of <3 days.

For the purpose of this projection a number of assumptions have been made;

- It is estimated that community demand will increase 0% from the as is demand.
- Nursing homes serial testing will have an uptake of 76%.
- Food Production serial testing will have an uptake of 75%.



4) Building agility into the test and trace system



Recruitment across contact tracing and swabbing

Recruitment

The HSE is focusing efforts and increasing resources across our test and trace system, in both swabbing and contact tracing.

Swabbing

As of November 17th, an additional 361 people have been onboarded to carry out swabbing activities. An additional 80 new staff join this week.

Contact Tracing

As of November 17th, an additional 461 contact tracers have been onboarded to date. A further 70 contact tracers are expected to be onboarded by the end of this week with an additional 70 onboarded next week.

Sample Validation Testing

Sample Validation Testing

- The HSE is carrying out a study to look at easier, faster and more comfortable ways to test people for COVID-19.
- The study will investigate the effectiveness of saliva testing and nasal swab testing compared to the nasopharyngeal swab (NPS) which is currently being used.
- The saliva and nasal swab tests are less invasive for patients generally than the standard nasopharyngeal swab. These were recently approved for testing of children in the community and the results of the study will be analysed to measure the effectiveness in adults.
- The study started this week at two testing centres in Letterkenny, Co Donegal and in Dunmanway, Co Cork.



Antigen Testing

Antigen Testing

- The HSE has established a Working Group who are verifying the range of antigen tests available in the marketplace.
- On the 12th of November, the HSE published and accelerated ETender process for the supply of Antigen tests for COVID-19.
- There is no decision yet on the full deployment of antigen tests in any setting. This is pending the working groups recommendations on verification of the tests available in the marketplace and possible deployment by public health.



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 **1.7 days**.



In the last week, we have seen a decrease in demand for community testing, by approximately **2%** from this time last week.



We have reached over **1,821,100** lab results completed to date as of 17th of November.



We continue to build agility in our test and trace system, 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.