

HSE COVID-19 Test and Trace Briefing

13th of January, 2022

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A circular inset image showing a microscopic view of several coronavirus particles. The particles are spherical with a textured surface and numerous spike-like projections (spikes) extending from them. They are set against a dark, slightly grainy background. The circular inset is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the dark teal background.

1. Key Test and Trace Messages



Test and Trace Key Messages

- HSE has increased capacity from 100,000 tests per week to 900,000 tests per week. PCR Testing capacity is at 300,000 per week from the original weekly 100,000 baseline capacity. Antigen testing capacity has increased from 0 to 600,000 per week.
- Community referrals have decreased by 24% in comparison to the same time-period last week while community positivity is now at 63.3%.
- Last week we did over 650,000 tests (303,000 PCR and c. 350,000 Antigen tests distributed).
- Like many testing systems and despite an increase in PCR testing capacity, access to PCR testing remains challenging in some areas for people. Clinical prioritisation is in place to ensure that those most in need receive access first which means hospitals, GPs and Close Contacts are prioritised.
- Additional pop-up testing centre open today in Finglas, Youghal, Mallow, Killarney, Limerick, Fairyhouse and on Friday in Finglas, Killarney, Limerick, Fairyhouse.
- Last week, we issued c. 350,000 antigen test kits to asymptomatic close contacts, Primary Schools and Early Learning and School Age Childcare and Symptomatic 4 to 39 years and other programmes.
- The automation systems we have developed in our Contact Management Programme means we can continue to quickly alert close contacts and provide them with the advice and testing they need. In the last 7 days contact tracing has been completed on 107,852 people who were positive for COVID-19.
- New Public Health advice including ability to report positive antigen cases will be in place from tomorrow Friday 14th January 2022.



Summary of new changes to be implemented on Friday

Changes to Ireland's self-isolation and restriction of movement rule were announced by the Minister for Health yesterday and the HSE is working to ensure they are implemented from Friday morning January 14th.

1. Positive antigen results will be considered to be a case, so individuals will no longer be asked to obtain a confirmatory PCR test
2. Individuals who have a positive antigen test result will be asked to report their positive antigen test and list their contacts on the HSE portal.
3. Close contacts of either a positive antigen case or positive PCR case will receive an SMS directing them to the HSE website so they can find out what (if any) testing they need and if they need to restrict their movements.

This is a very significant change in public health advice and requires significant work across many Test and Trace processes to implement including:

- Finalisation of the Public Health advice
- Development of an online IT system to allow those with a positive antigen upload their result and list their close contacts
- Changes to the online PCR test booking system
- Updates to automated SMS issued by the Test and Trace service
- Updates to contact tracing scripts and scenario manuals and education and training sessions on the changes for over 800 contact tracing staff
- Reworking of all the guidance on [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie) to ensure that the public are clear on a) what test they should book and b) how long, if at all, should they restrict their movements
- Ensuring all public communications materials are updated to reflect the new guidance
- Redevelopment of the antigen booking process to include the additional categories of people who will now be using antigen testing
- Ensuring the necessary supply and distribution channels are in place for the additional demands on antigen testing.



Testing Capacity has increased significantly since September

PCR Capacity Per week

September

105,000

- ✓ The community testing service was established initially to support the delivery of 105,000 tests per week.

October

147,000

- ✓ Additional measures to increase capacity - support of our community testing teams, the National Ambulance service, the Defence Forces - to 147,000 per week

November

224,000

- ✓ Private providers - 6 new testing sites
- ✓ Recruitment is ongoing for swabbers
- ✓ Home & Mobile testing increased to 2,400

December

300,000

- ✓ Overall capacity increased through December

January

300,000

- ✓ Additional capacity for PCR secured in January

Antigen Test Kits capacity per week

October

20,000

- ✓ Includes antigen for asymptomatic close contacts

November

100,000

- ✓ Includes antigen for asymptomatic close contacts and schools programme

December

140,000

- ✓ Includes antigen for asymptomatic close contacts and Schools programme

January

600,000

- ✓ Additional capacity for antigen testing



Test and Trace Headlines 05th – 11th January

Referrals



276,236

Referrals from
05th – 11th January

Swabs



255,634

Swabs completed from
05th – 11th January

Lab Tests



303,342

Laboratory Tests completed
from 05th – 11th January

Contact Tracing



170,692

Calls made to Detected
Cases

TaT Not Detected



2.8 Days

End to End Turnaround
Time for Not Detected result

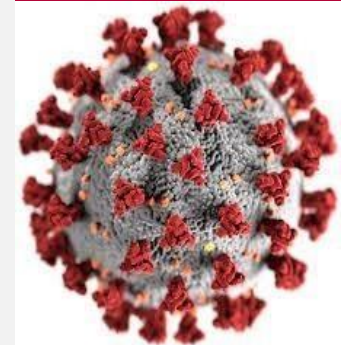
TaT Detected



2.9 Days

End to End Turnaround
Time for Detected result

Positivity Rate



63.3%

Positivity Rate from
29th December – 04th
January

Note: The above swab figures represent total community swabs. Additional swabs are carried out in private and acute settings.

A circular inset image showing a microscopic view of several coronavirus particles. The particles are spherical with a textured surface and numerous spike-like protrusions (glycoprotein spikes) extending from them. They are set against a dark, slightly grainy background, suggesting a fluid environment.

2. Testing Volumes and Turnaround Times



Test and Trace Volumes

The following metrics and turnaround times refer to the seven days from 05th– 11th January



Total Community Referrals

- There were **276,236 community referrals** over the seven-day period (**24% decrease** in comparison to last week).
- This referral figure includes
 - **81,066 self-referrals** (↓ **36%** compared to last week)
 - **78,324 GP referrals** (↓ **54%** compared to last week)



Total Community Swabs Completed

- During this time period, there were **255,634** swabs completed.



Laboratory Tests and Detected Rate

- During this time period, there was c. **303,342** lab tests reported in community, private and acute settings over the past week.
- The average detected rate over the past week is **approximately 54% - Community and Acute and Serial blended. Community on its own is 63.3%**



Contact Tracing

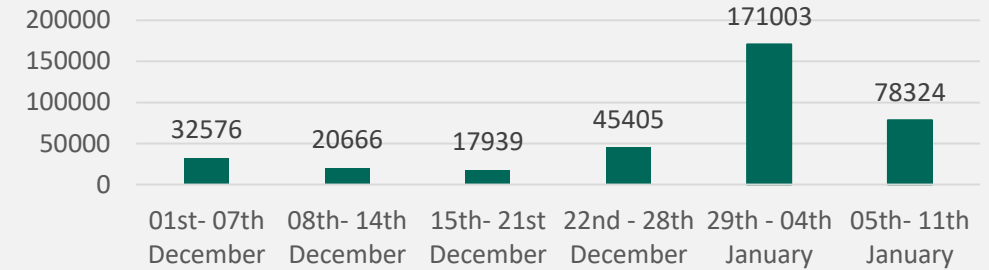
- Over the last 7 days, of those tested with close contacts, the average number **close contacts was 2.5 per person**.
- From 05th – 11th January, a total of 170,692 calls were completed to inform individuals of their detected COVID-19 test result.
- From 05th – 11th January, contact tracing was completed for 107,852 individuals that had a confirmed COVID-19 case



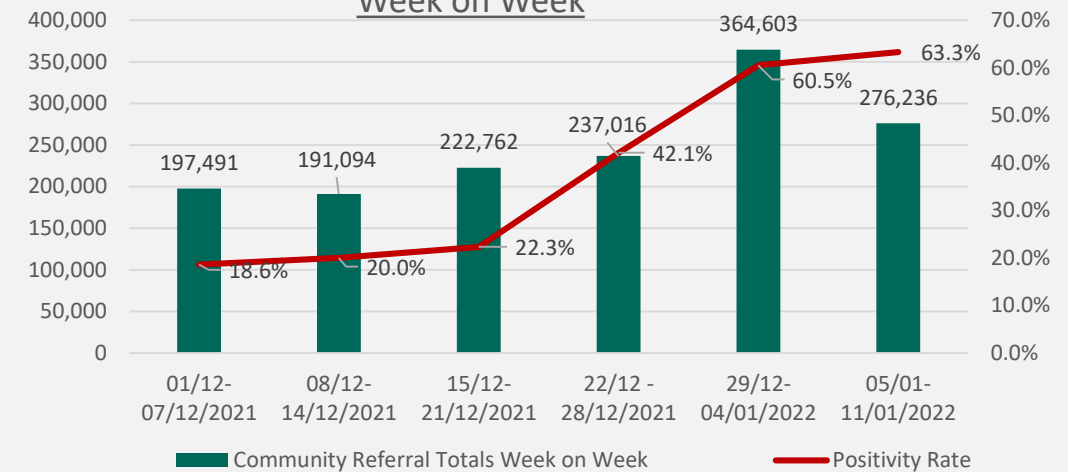
Testing Trends

- GP referrals weekly total has **decreased by 54%** in comparison to the same time-period last week
- Community referrals weekly total has **decreased by 24%** in comparison to the same time-period last week
- From the 05th – 11th January, there were **303,342 Lab Tests** (including in the community, private and acute labs)
- Seeing some improvement in self referral availability in test centres

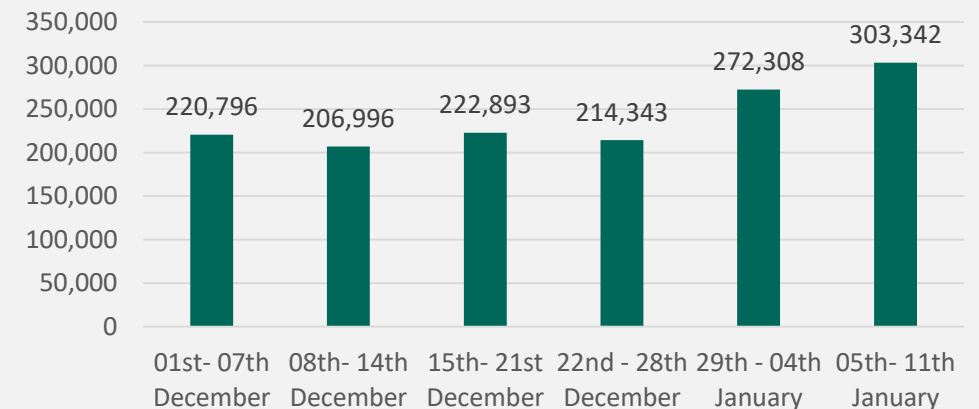
GP Referrals Week on Week



Total Community Referrals and Positivity Rates
Week on Week



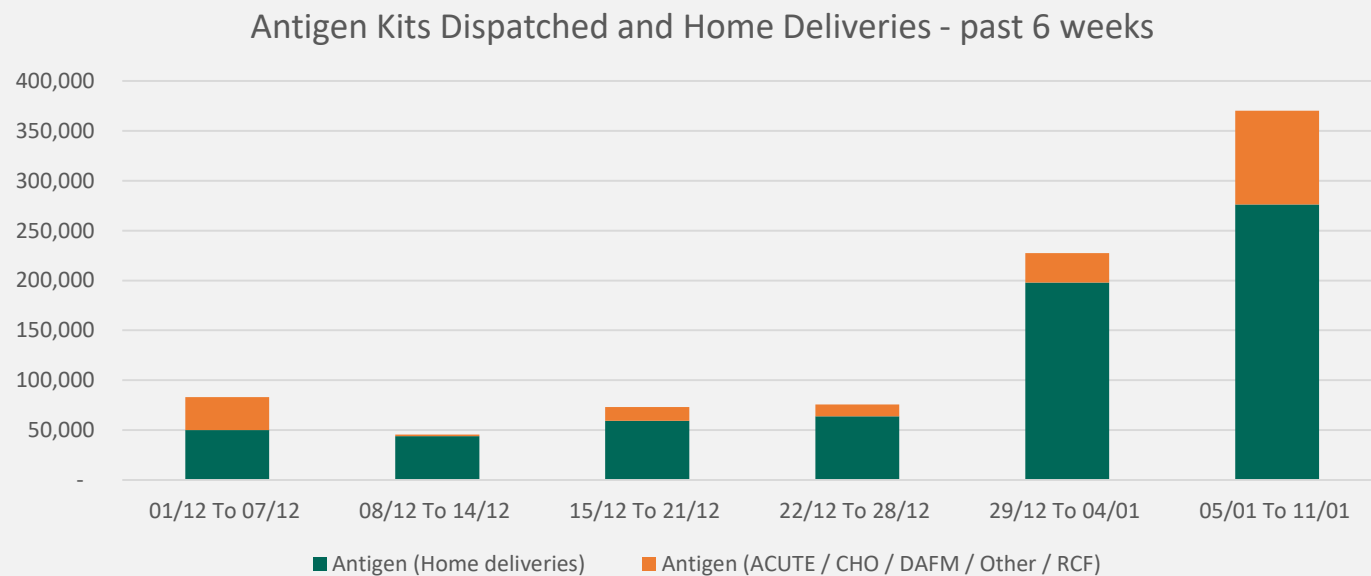
Lab Activity Week on Week





Antigen Dispatches and Home Deliveries

- From the 05th – 11th January, there were **c. 350,000 Antigen Kits** dispatched across the different testing programmes
- The graph to the right shows a weekly breakdown of antigen test kits dispatched and antigen home deliveries over the past 6 weeks

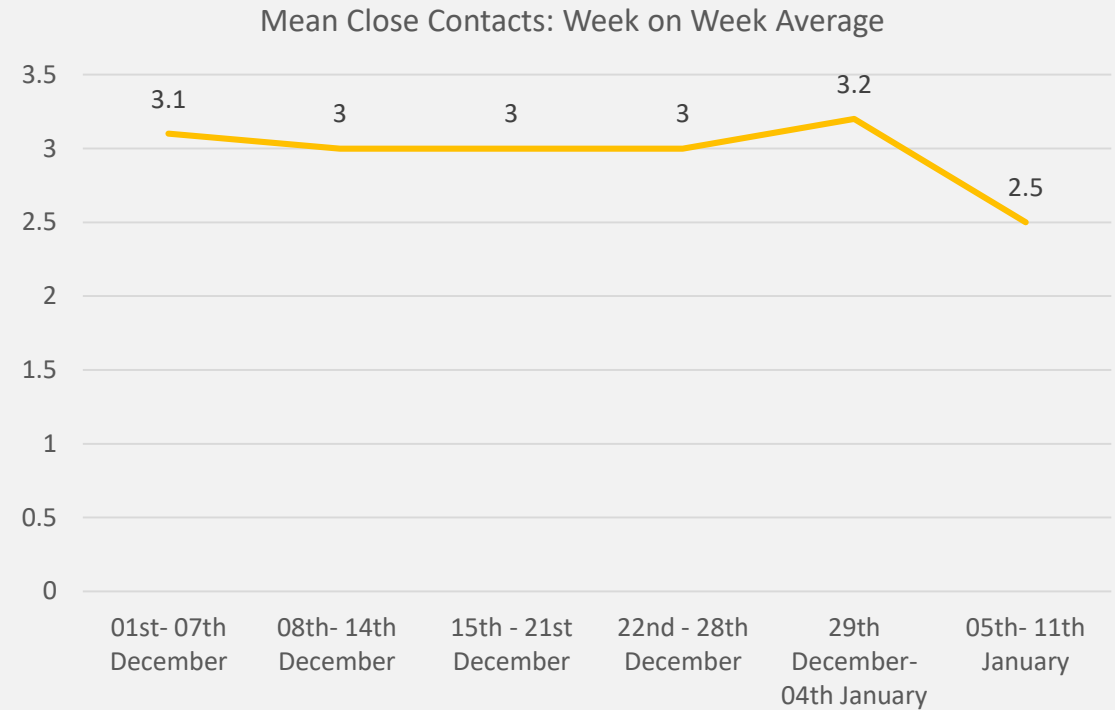




Close Contacts Trend

2.5

Over the last 7 days, of those tested with at least one close contact, the mean number of close contacts per person was **2.5**



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3. Testing Programmes



Serial Testing in Nursing Homes

Serial testing of staff in RCFs commenced on 20th June 2020. Testing is underway however the data is currently unavailable due to ongoing validation. Update to be included in the coming week.



Serial Testing in Mental Health Facilities

In Cycle 12 (Commenced 11th December)



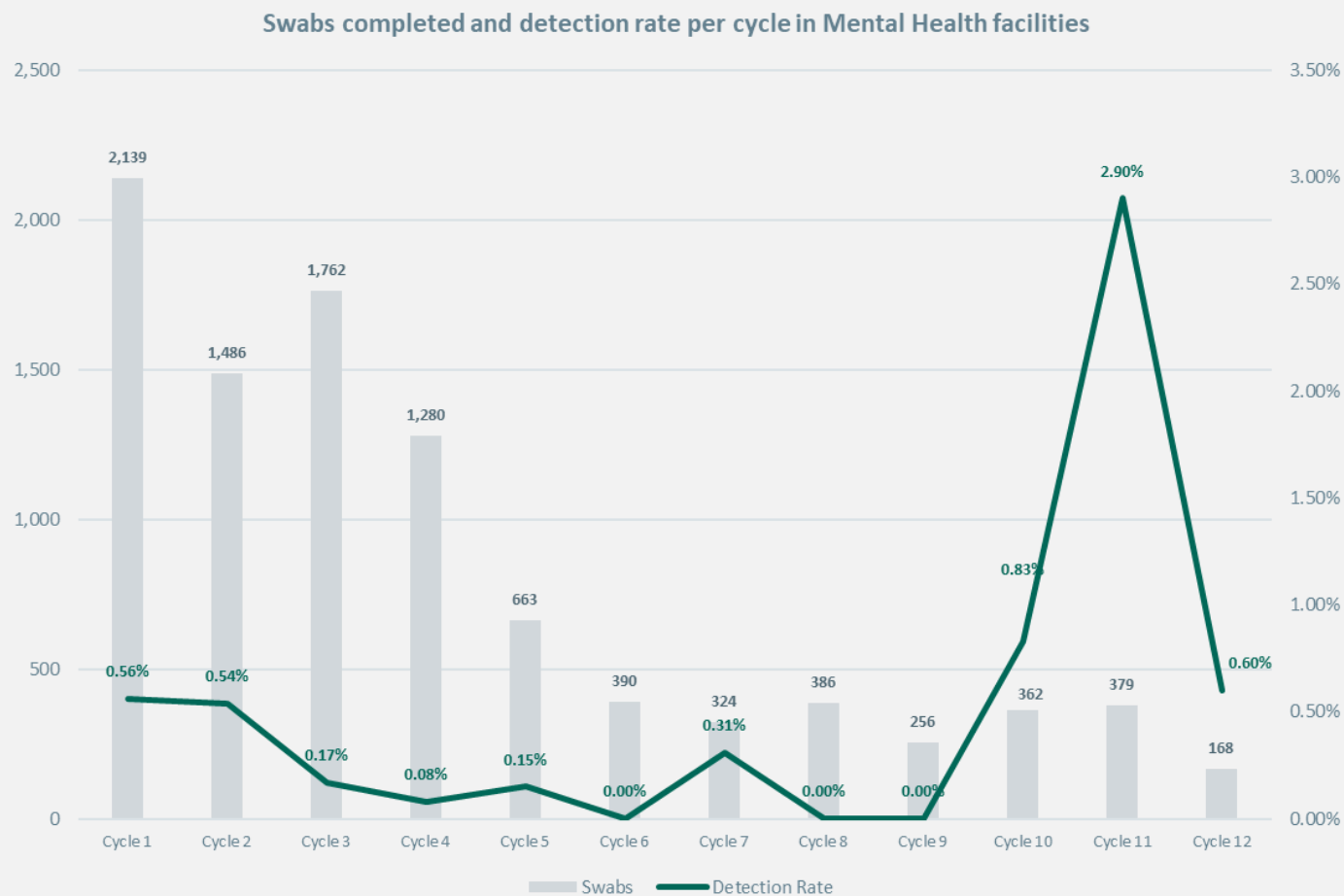
2 facilities have been tested



168 tests have been completed



1 detected cases identified
(0.60% detected rate)





Serial Testing in Food Production Facilities

In Cycle 16 (Commenced 15th November)



65 facilities have been tested

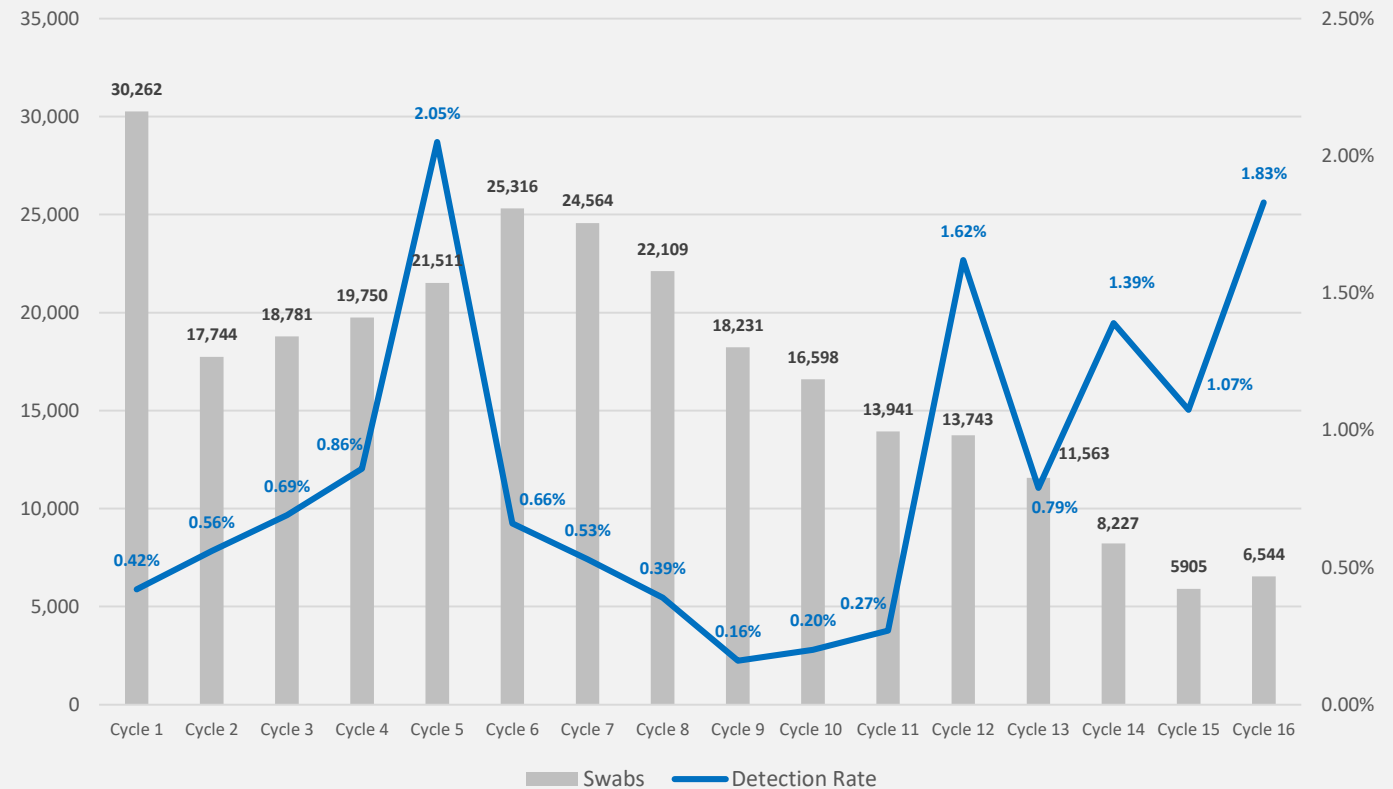


6,544 tests have been completed



120 detected cases identified
(1.83% detected rate)

Swabs completed and detection rate per cycle in Food Production facilities



Note: Food serial testing has now been paused indefinitely due to community testing demand.

A circular inset image showing a microscopic view of several coronavirus particles. The particles are spherical with a textured surface and numerous spike-like projections (glycoprotein spikes) extending from them. They are set against a dark, slightly hazy background within the circle.

4. Recruitment



Recruitment as of 10th January

803

Staff supporting Contact Tracing

Of these 803 staff;
709 of these staff have been hired
and retained as part of
dedicated workforce to support
the contact tracing function

The remaining **94** staff are redeployed
from the HSE and other Public Service
Roles

