



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Testing data for coronavirus (COVID-19): up to 20 September 2020

Management information update on coronavirus testing up to 20 September 2020.

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1. National headline figures

This statistical release summarises weekly coronavirus (COVID-19) testing information provided by Public Health Wales and NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS). This includes information on the number of antigen tests including a breakdown by key worker and residents where key workers are employed, turnaround times of antigen tests and the number of antibody tests for key workers and residents.

There are currently two types of tests used to test for coronavirus (COVID-19), the antigen test and the antibody test. The antigen (swab) test is used to test whether someone with symptoms has coronavirus. The type of test processed through Welsh laboratories involves a 'single dry swab' taken from the back of the throat. The type of test processed through English laboratories involves 'two wet swab' sample collections taken from the nose and throat.

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COVID-19 antibody tests are used to find out whether a person has previously had the virus. The antibody test works by taking a blood sample and testing for the presence of antibodies. Antibodies are produced by the body in response to an infection and can usually be found in the blood after around 2 weeks following infection. Some local health boards are now using lateral flow tests, which are finger prick antibody tests with the sample not analysed in a laboratory.

The data are taken from management information and are subject to change. They have not been subject to the same validation processes undertaken for official statistics releases. We are publishing these data to provide a weekly summary of testing activity in Wales, including tests on critical workers, residents and the timeliness of tests. This statistical release is evolving and we appreciate feedback to improve the content.

Accompanying tables for this release are available separately, including all the data shown in this release and historical data.

Our data explainer titled **Understanding data on coronavirus (COVID-19) testing** provides further explanation on the data used including the difference in dates and data sources.

Following changes in the source data provided by non-NHS Wales Laboratories, the data interpretation to allocate tests to different pathways was no longer fully functioning. An interim solution covering the latest three weeks has been put in place while a permanent solution is being implemented by NWIS. Whilst the methodology is robust, this management information is subject to revision.

Main results

- Antigen lab capacity in NHS Wales laboratories was 15,167 as at 20 September 2020. This does not include capacity at UK laboratories where some Welsh residents' samples are processed.
- As at 1pm on 20 September 2020, there have been 731,961 antigen tests authorised for Welsh residents.
- There have been a total of 400,942 antigen tests performed on critical

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workers and residents where critical workers are employed in Wales.

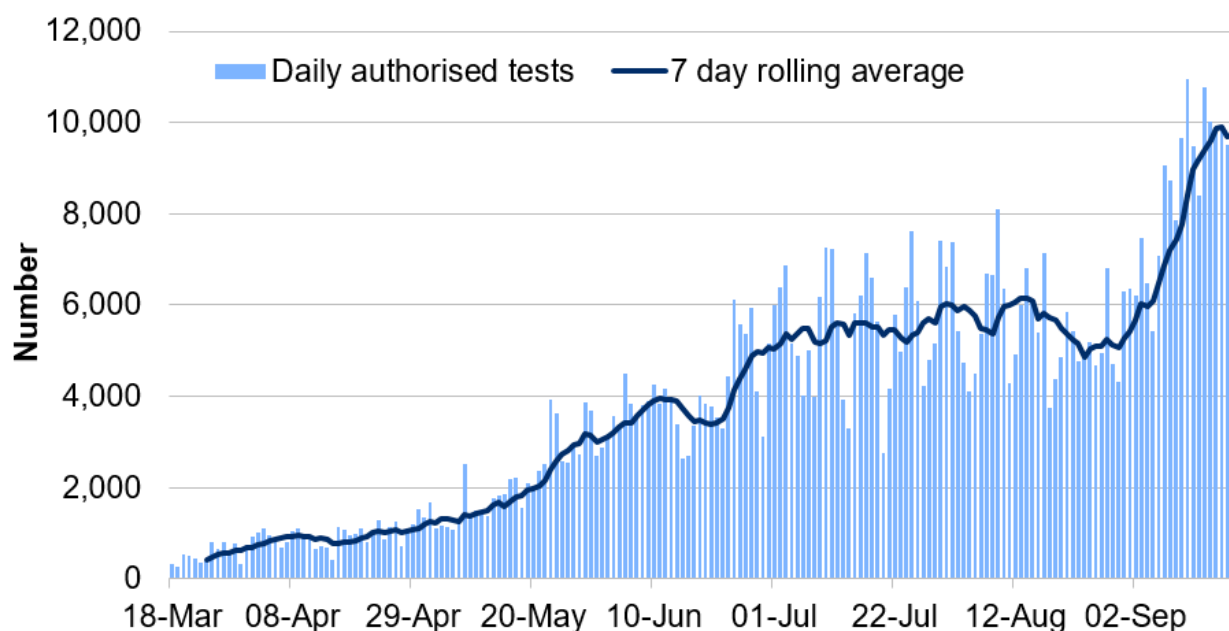
- Up to the end of 20 September 2020, 83,273 antibody tests have been authorised for Welsh residents with 9,001 positive results.

In the latest week:

- 62% of tests requiring a rapid turnaround were completed within one calendar day*
- 65% of community and mass testing in person tests and 88% of hospital tests processed in NHS Wales laboratories were authorised in one day
- 55% of community tests processed in non-NHS Wales laboratories were authorised in one day*
- less than 1% of tests via the organisation portal and 4% of home tests were authorised within one day. (See [Understanding data on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing](#) for more information about test location categories.)

* Tests requiring a rapid turnaround time are samples collected at hospitals, community and mass testing: in person sites processed in NHS Wales laboratories and samples collected at community test centres processed in non-NHS Wales laboratories.

Chart 1: Total number of antigen tests authorised through NHS Wales and non-NHS Wales laboratories at 1pm on 20 September 2020



Source: Public Health Wales

Total number of antigen tests authorised through NHS Wales and non-NHS Wales laboratories at 1pm on 20 September 2020 (MS Excel)

Data for 20 September only includes results authorised up to 1pm.

Public Health Wales have finalised their work to bring together tests authorised in non-NHS Wales (Lighthouse) laboratories with NHS Wales laboratory processed tests. Chart 1 shows the number of tests authorised in both NHS Wales and non-NHS Wales laboratories.

- The highest number of tests authorised in a single calendar day was on 11 September, where 10,964 tests were authorised in NHS Wales and non-NHS Wales laboratories.
- These figures include tests processed through laboratories outside NHS Wales, which includes tests for Welsh residents taken at testing centres in England, testing centres in Wales, tests ordered through the organisation portal and home testing kits.
- The first sample processed by a non-NHS Wales laboratory for a Welsh

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resident was on 24 April. Testing increased with the roll out of home testing on 18 May.

- Tests processed through non-NHS Wales laboratories began to increase towards the end of June. This is largely due to Welsh residents beginning to book tests through the newly available organisation portal.

Table 1: Weekly number of tests authorised in NHS Wales and non-NHS Wales laboratories as at end 20 September 2020

Week commencing	Number of tests authorised
22 June 2020	34,859
29 June 2020	37,551
06 July 2020	39,237
13 July 2020	38,602
20 July 2020	37,782
27 July 2020	41,217
03 August 2020	40,151
10 August 2020	39,886
17 August 2020	36,174
24 August 2020	35,498
31 August 2020	45,304

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Week commencing	Number of tests authorised
07 September 2020	64,167
14 September 2020	61,390

Source: Public Health Wales rapid surveillance dashboard

The number of tests authorised within the last week is slightly lower than the previous week, however, only results up to 1pm are included on Sunday 20 September. Public Health Wales update this data daily and the latest week will increase when tests authorised after 1pm are included.

This data is extracted from Public Health Wales' rapid surveillance dashboard on 21 September at 2pm. These tests do not include results which were not positive or negative, for example indeterminate results and may differ from totals presented in other tables where indeterminate results are included. In the latest week only tests up to 1pm on the Sunday are included, this is updated daily and presented on the [Public Health Wales surveillance dashboard](#).

2. Turnaround times for antigen tests

The figures shown are measured from the date a sample is recorded as being collected to the time the result is authorised. It does not indicate how long it takes for an individual to receive their result from point of testing.

Data on the time taken to receive a COVID-19 test result is split by testing route, as this will have an impact on the time taken to complete the test processing. Home tests need to be posted and couriered to the laboratory. Screening tests in settings such as care homes may be completed in batches of tests across different staff shifts before returning the tests by courier. These methods can have an impact on the turnaround time of the test. Screening care home tests processed by NHS Wales laboratories are included in the satellite asymptomatic screening of key workers figures.

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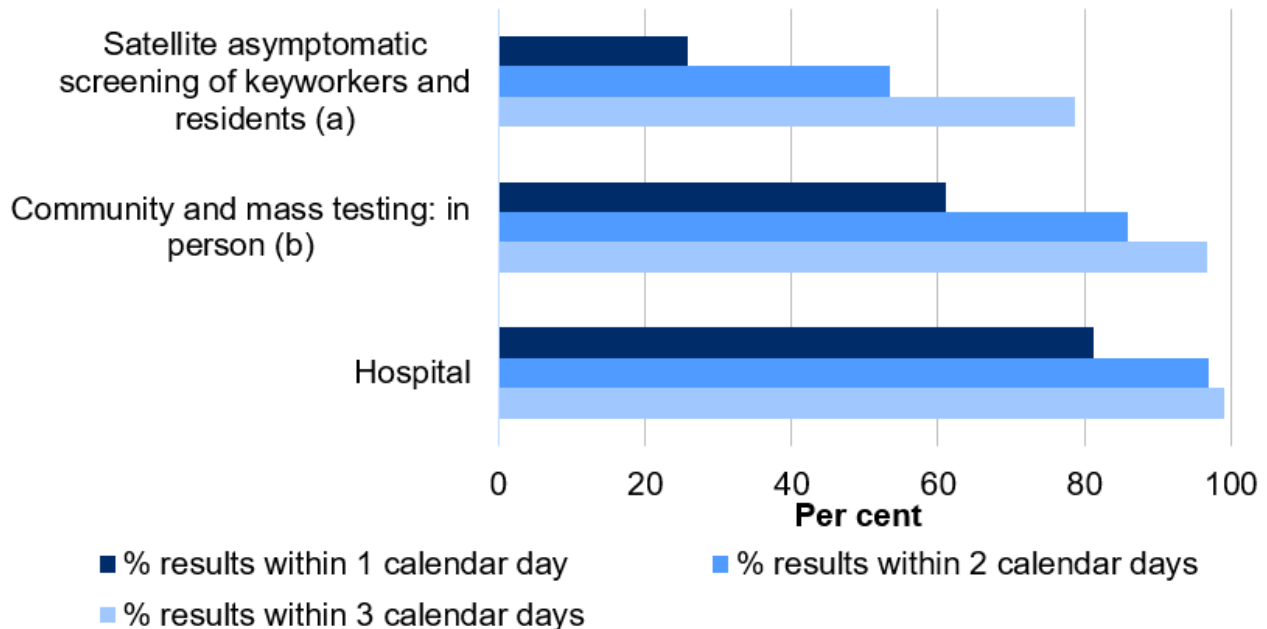
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We have split out the community tests by the different pathways, with tests completed due to clinical need reported separately to tests completed to screen individuals who have been identified as asymptomatic key workers or residents. Although the term satellite is used, some of the screening tests of asymptomatic keyworkers or residents included in this category may be conducted in person as part of wider mass and community testing. Further work is needed to fully understand this distinction and may lead to some reallocation of tests between categories in future releases.

Further information can be found in our data explainer including what is included in the each location category: [Understanding data on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing](#).

Previously, the majority of samples collected at mass testing centres were processed in NHS Wales laboratories, however, a number of these centres now use the non-NHS Wales laboratories (known as lighthouse laboratories).

Chart 2: Cumulative proportion of antigen tests authorised from NHS Wales laboratories within one, two and three calendar days as at end 20 September 2020



Source: Public Health Wales

(a) Samples collected as part of community key worker screening programmes, such as asymptomatic tests in care homes. Although the term satellite is used, some of the screening tests of asymptomatic keyworkers or residents included in this category may be conducted in person as part of wider mass and community testing. Further work is needed to fully understand this distinction and may lead to some reallocation of tests between categories in future releases.

(b) Samples collected in mass testing centres, community testing units and mobile testing units. Includes individuals not identified as asymptomatic and pre-operative screening tests.

Cumulative proportion of antigen tests authorised from NHS Wales laboratories within one, two and three calendar days as at end 20 September 2020 (MS Excel)

Since testing began up until the end of 20 September 2020:

- there have been 91,859 tests authorised as part of satellite asymptomatic screening of keyworkers, with 25.8% of results authorised within one calendar day and 53.5% authorised within two calendar days

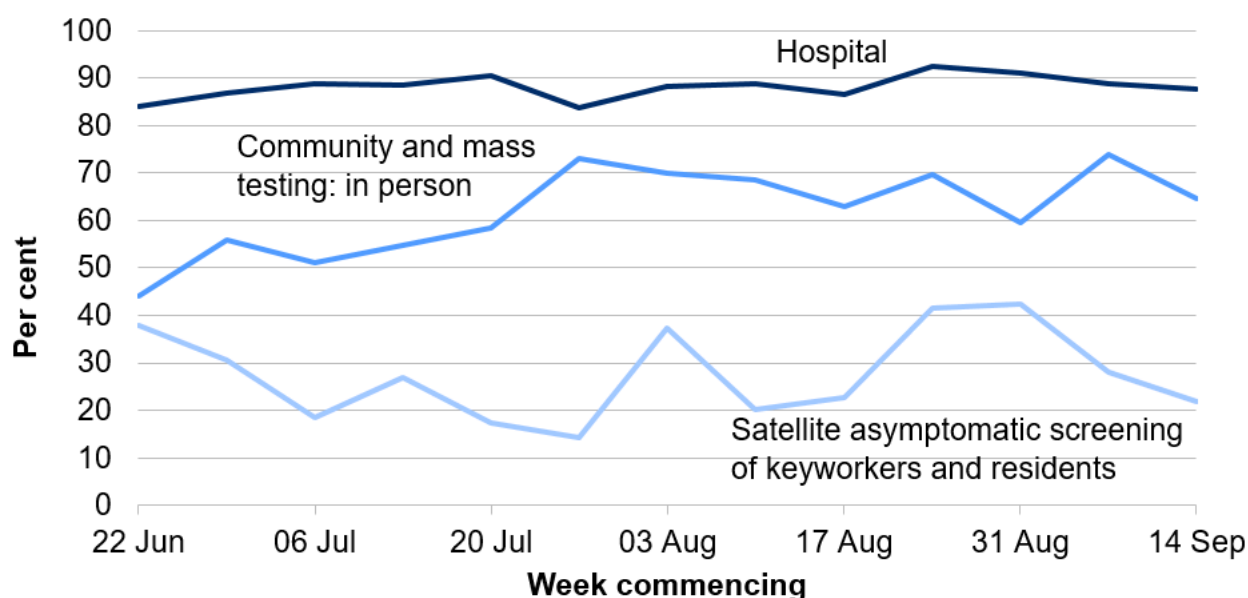
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- there have been 75,417 tests authorised for community and mass testing: in person, with 61.1% of results authorised within one day and 85.9% authorised within two calendar days
- there have been 97,946 tests authorised at hospital, with 81.3% of results authorised within one day and 96.9% authorised within two days

Chart 3: Proportion of antigen tests authorised in one calendar day through NHS Wales laboratories as at end 20 September 2020



Source: Public Health Wales

Proportion of antigen tests authorised in one calendar day through NHS Wales laboratories as at end 22 September 2020 (MS Excel)

In the latest week (commencing 14 September 2020):

- there have been 3,994 tests authorised as part of a key worker satellite asymptomatic screening programme, with 21.9% authorised within one day, a decrease compared to the previous week
- there have been 12,312 tests authorised as part of community and mass testing in person, with 64.6% authorised within one day, a decrease compared to the previous week
- there have been 5,927 tests authorised at hospital, with 87.8% authorised

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within one day, a decrease compared to the previous week

The number of tests as part of satellite asymptomatic screening of key workers and residents has fallen since the beginning of August. This coincides with a change in the care homes testing policy from weekly to fortnightly testing, with the exception of one local health board.

Tests carried out as part of satellite asymptomatic screening of key workers and residents which are authorised in NHS Wales laboratories are mainly satellite tests. However, there may be a small proportion which are in person screening of key workers at testing sites. Satellite tests are when the sample is collected in a different setting other than a testing centre, for example care homes. Once the sample has been collected a courier is requested to collect the samples and deliver to a laboratory for processing. Care homes may complete batches of tests across different staff shifts before returning the tests by courier. These methods can have an impact on the turnaround time of the test with a large number of tests included in these categories being from care homes.

Although the term satellite is used, some of the screening tests of asymptomatic keyworkers or residents included in this category may be conducted in person as part of wider mass and community testing. Further work is needed to fully understand this distinction and may lead to some reallocation of tests between categories in future releases.

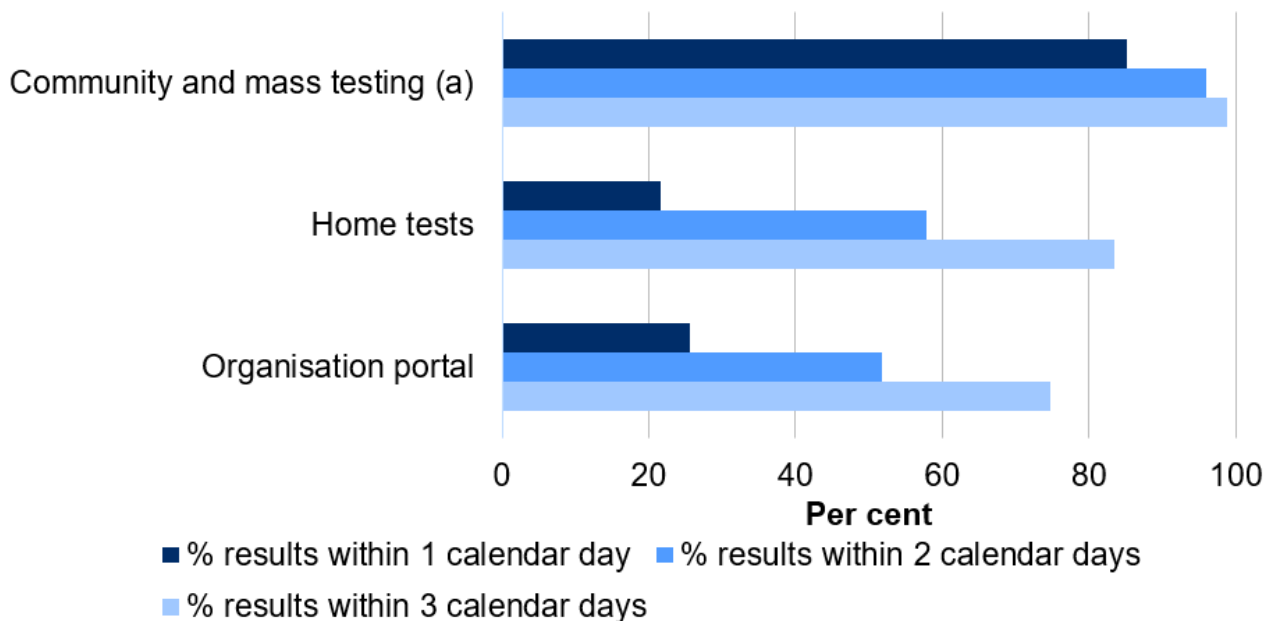
The majority of tests for satellite asymptomatic screening of key workers processed in NHS Wales laboratories are for care homes (93%). In the latest week 84% of asymptomatic screening of key workers were for care home staff. The breakdown is provided in the accompanying data tables.

Prior to 22 June, data was not available to provide the split between community and mass testing in person and satellite asymptomatic screening of key workers. Combined data for community testing prior to 22 June and previous week's turnaround times are included in the accompanying data tables.

Following changes in the source data provided by non-NHS Wales Laboratories, the data interpretation to allocate test to different pathways was no longer fully functioning. An interim solution covering the latest three weeks has been put in

place while a permanent solution is being implemented by NWIS. Whilst the methodology is robust, this management information is subject to revision.

Chart 4: Cumulative proportion of antigen tests authorised from non-NHS Wales laboratories within one, two and calendar three days as at end 20 September 2020



Source: Public Health Wales

(a) Community includes samples collected at mass testing centres, community testing units and mobile testing units.

Cumulative proportion of antigen tests authorised from non-NHS Wales laboratories within one, two and calendar three days as at end 20 September 2020 (MS Excel)

Since testing began up until the end of 20 September 2020:

- there have been 179,694 organisation portal tests authorised with 25.5% of results authorised within one day and 51.7% authorised within two days
- there have been 64,335 home tests authorised, with 21.7% of results authorised within one day and 57.8% authorised within two days
- there have been 118,206 tests authorised from community testing processed

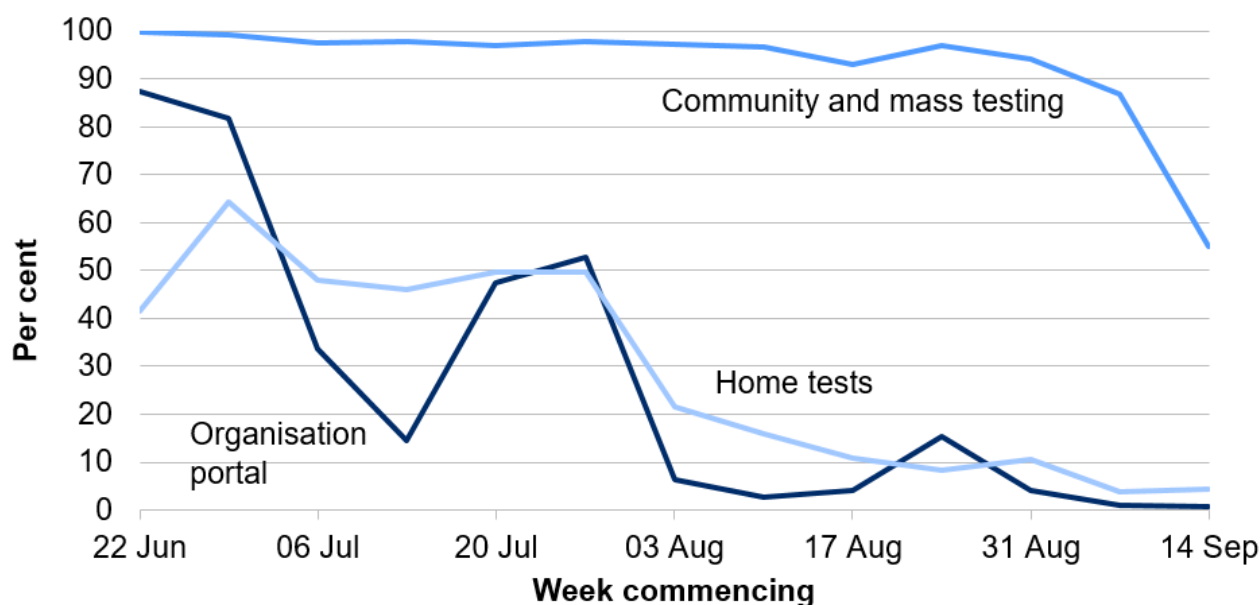
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in non-NHS Wales laboratories, with 85.2% of results authorised within one day and 95.9% authorised within two days

Chart 5: Proportion of antigen tests authorised in one calendar day through non-NHS Wales laboratories as at end 20 September 2020



Source: Public Health Wales

Proportion of antigen tests authorised in one calendar day through non-NHS Wales laboratories as at end 20 September 2020 (MS Excel)

In the latest week of available data (commencing 14 September 2020):

- there have been 16,337 organisation portal tests authorised with 0.7% authorised within one calendar day, which is lower than previous weeks
- there have been 6,353 home tests authorised with 4.4% authorised within one calendar day, a slight increase on the previous week but still one of the lowest turnaround times for home tests since the end of April.
- there have been 25,549 tests authorised from community tests processed in non-NHS Wales laboratories with 55.0% authorised within one calendar day. This is 32 percentage points lower than the previous week.

The reduction in turnaround times from 27 July for non-NHS Wales home-tests

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and organisation portal tests was caused by demand for repeating screening across the UK temporarily exceeding the total Lighthouse laboratory capacity. This resulted in temporary backlogs at the laboratories which impacted on end-to-end turnaround time for tests through these channels.

The number of community tests processed by non-NHS Wales laboratories has increased in recent weeks with more test centres in Wales sending samples to these laboratories to be processed instead of NHS Wales laboratories. This has coincided with an increase in demand for tests from Welsh residents with 25,549 samples authorised from test centres in the week commencing 14 September compared to 10,603 in the week commencing 24 August.

3. Critical workers and residents antigen tests

Table 2: Total number of antigen tests and results for critical workers and residents as at end 20 September 2020

Category	Total positive tests	Total negative tests	Total number of tests
Key worker: care home	1,400	111,867	113,267
Resident: care home	1,413	49,498	50,911
Resident or key worker: care home	413	181,544	181,957
Care home total	3,226	342,909	346,135
Key worker: domiciliary care	0	77	77
Domiciliary care total	0	77	77

Category	Total positive tests	Total negative tests	Total number of tests
Key worker: education	32	1,194	1,226
Resident: education	8	1,117	1,125
Resident or key worker: education	*	*	12
Education total	42	2,321	2,363
Key worker: emergency	156	1,141	1,297
Emergency total	156	1,141	1,297
Key worker: healthcare	6,476	29,576	36,052
Healthcare total	6,476	29,576	36,052
Key worker: hostel or supported living	20	1,082	1,102
Resident: hostel or supported living	94	4,967	5,061
Resident or key worker: hostel or supported living	11	25	36
Hostel or supported living total	125	6,074	6,199
Keyworker: prison or detention centre	25	159	184
Resident: prison or detention centre	*	*	42

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Category	Total positive tests	Total negative tests	Total number of tests
Resident or key worker: prison or detention centre	109	519	628
Prison or detention centre total	136	718	854
Key worker: other or unknown	557	6,732	7,289
Resident: other or unknown	102	574	676
Other or unknown total	659	7,306	7,965

Source: Public Health Wales

* The data item is suppressed to avoid disclosure.

Table 1 shows the number of tests authorised for critical workers and residents where critical workers are employed in Wales authorised in NHS Wales and non-NHS Wales laboratories.

Public Health Wales are currently undertaking improvements to the critical worker and resident category in their data. This has led to revisions in the data and different categories being used compared to previous publications.

The care home portal was restructured as the organisational portal on Friday 28 August to include a wide variety of organisations – not just care homes. Previously Public Health Wales used this location category to identify tests from non-NHS Wales laboratories for care home workers and residents, however, this is not possible since the restructure to the organisation portal. From 28 August the requesting clinician field has been used to identify care home tests through the UK Organisation Portal, this is dependent on the correct codes being used, otherwise these tests will be included in the key worker or resident: other or unknown category.

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- Around 86% of all tests for critical workers were performed on care home residents or care home workers.
- Around 18% of tests conducted for healthcare workers identified positive results.

The number of tests recorded for critical workers is dependent on the critical worker category being recorded in the system when the sample was taken. It is currently not possible to distinguish between key worker and residents for samples processed in non-NHS Wales laboratories and have been included together in the table.

It is possible to distinguish between key workers and residents for tests authorised in NHS Wales laboratories, however, it is not possible to do this for tests authorised in non-NHS Wales laboratories. For tests authorised in non-NHS Wales laboratories the location has been used to identify key workers and residents. For example, tests authorised in non-NHS Wales laboratories from samples collected at a care home are included in the Resident or key worker: care home category in Table 1.

Following changes in the source data provided by non-NHS Wales Laboratories, the data interpretation to allocate test to different pathways was no longer fully functioning. This affected identifying some key workers and residents, specifically care home staff and residents through the organisation portal. An interim solution covering the latest three weeks has been put in place while a permanent solution is being implemented by NWIS. Whilst the methodology is robust, this management information is subject to revision.

4. Critical workers and residents antibody tests

Table 3: Total number of antibody tests and results for critical workers and residents as at end 20 September 2020

Category	Positive results	Negative results	Equivocal results	Number of tests
Key worker or resident: care home	40	218	9	267
Key worker or resident: education	1,127	19,113	17	20,257
Key worker: emergency	85	429	6	520
Key worker: healthcare	5,810	40,748	19	46,577
Key worker or resident: other or unknown	88	1,149	6	1,243
Key worker or resident: prison or detention centre	9	*	*	63
Resident: hostel or supported living	*	*	*	*
Household member of keyworker	*	*	*	7
Not specified	1,841	12,419	75	14,335

Source: Public Health Wales & NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

* The data item is suppressed to avoid disclosure.

Table 2 shows the number of antibody tests authorised in NHS Wales laboratories and lateral flow tests.

Since testing began up until the end of 20 September 2020 there have been 20,257 antibody tests for key workers or residents in education and 46,577 antibody tests for healthcare key workers. This reflects the current sampling strategy of prioritising antibody testing for these key workers and residents. These data include 12,164 lateral flow tests.

A lateral flow test is the finger prick test currently being used by some local health boards. The remainder of antibody tests are the laboratory assay test where a sample of blood is tested in a laboratory.

The number of tests and results reflect a snapshot in time and will be greatly influenced by the sampling strategy at that moment in time. Currently antibody testing is only available to priority groups, more information is available in the [Antibody testing: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) pages of our website.

If an antibody test is equivocal, it means that the result is inconclusive.

5. Background

We are publishing these data to provide a weekly summary of testing activity in Wales, including tests on critical workers, residents and the timeliness of tests. This statistical release is evolving and we appreciate feedback to improve the content.

From 13 July, Public Health Wales have combined tests and results processed in NHS Wales laboratories and non-NHS Wales laboratories, which were previously reported separately. Chart 1 and Table 1 and 2 include tests processed for Welsh residents through both NHS Wales laboratories and non-NHS Wales (Lighthouse) laboratories. Charts 2 and 3 show only tests authorised at NHS Wales laboratories and Charts 4 and 5 only shows tests authorised through non-NHS Wales laboratories. Table 2 shows antibody tests authorised through NHS Wales laboratories and lateral flow (finger prick) tests.

The data in this release is based on a mixture of dates at different stages of the testing process, such as specimen date, processing date and authorised data. Each table in the Open Data spreadsheet details the reporting timeframe.

Our data explainer titled [Understanding data on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing](#) provides further explanation on the data used including the difference in dates and data sources.

COVID-19 antibody tests are used to find out whether a person has previously had the virus. The antibody test works by taking a blood sample and testing for the presence of antibodies. Antibodies are produced by the body in response to an infection and can usually be found in the blood after around 2 weeks following infection. Some local health boards are now using lateral flow tests, which are finger prick antibody tests with the sample not analysed in a laboratory.

Antibody testing is only available to priority groups at the moment with testing prioritised for a sample of school staff who have previously worked in education hubs and healthcare workers. Further explanation of antibody testing in Wales can be found on the [Antibody testing: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) page.

Data included in this release is correct at 23:59 on 20 September unless otherwise stated.

6. Quality and methodology information

Context

The data is management information which has been collected to support testing operations. We're publishing these data to provide a timely summary of testing activity but has not undergone the same level of quality assurance as official statistics, with the data subject to future revisions. This weekly summary of COVID-19 testing information from the [Public Health Wales \(PHW\) daily surveillance dashboard](#), plus further detail on the number of tests on critical workers and the location that the test sample was collected.

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This information helps to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and contribute to Wales monitoring and decision-making.

Relevance

Public Health Wales analyse patient testing data from WLIMS as part of their disease surveillance responsibilities. In addition, these statistics are used daily for a number of other purposes:

- to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
- to support evidence-based advice on future decisions around reviews of lockdown arrangements
- contributions to Wales and UK wide monitoring and decision-making

Accuracy

Public Health Wales Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre is responsible for carrying out surveillance of respiratory infections in Wales including the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Clinical data is stored in the Welsh Laboratory Information System (WLIMS), this includes COVID-19 testing data. The data is accessed and cleansed by Public Health Wales analysts, this includes removing duplicate positive cases prior to publishing the data on their daily surveillance dashboard. The data is revised on a daily basis and is classed as provisional subject to future revision.

Different test dates have been used when reporting test data depending on the nature of the data and the use. For rapid surveillance data the authorised test date has been used and is included in the headline figures presented by Public Health Wales, whereas for detailed surveillance over time the specimen date has been used.

Further information can be found in our data explainer: [Understanding data on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing](#).

Timeliness and punctuality

The data in this release provides data from the 18 March 2020 and onwards.

Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release has been pre-announced and then published on the [Statistics and Research section of our website](#). It is accompanied by an Open Document Spreadsheet to allow users to have direct access to the data that underlies the charts in this release.

Comparability

Public Health Wales produce a [daily surveillance dashboard](#) where users can access the most up to date information on the number of tests authorised, individuals tested (testing episodes) and positive cases.

Data for [England](#) is published on the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#) pages of the GOV.UK website.

Data for Scotland is published on the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): daily data for Scotland](#) pages of the GOV.SCOT website.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) also publish daily information on tests and positive cases.

National Statistics status

These statistics are not National Statistics. However, as far as has been practicable, they have been collected and validated in accordance with the pillars and principles within the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). We continue to develop the data collection and quality assurance process to improve the data.

These statistics have been produced quickly in response to developing world

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events.

Well-being of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ('national indicators') that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Next update

This is currently a weekly statistical release. It will be published at 9.30am every Wednesday. We will review the frequency in line with changing user need.

The next release will be on Wednesday 30 September.

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be

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