



Media Release

embargo until time/date

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Antibody Testing

517 HSC staff have been tested for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, following the introduction of clinics offering testing to healthcare staff.

This latest development to the testing programme, which commenced at the beginning of July, will identify all those staff who have antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 including some who may have experienced no symptoms at all, and therefore, were not tested for the virus.

The results so far are as follows:

Total Tested	517
Total Positive	15
Total negative	477
Awaiting results	25

Positives as a proportion of those tested so far represent 2.9%

Jenny Cataroche, Head of Health Intelligence, Public Health Services said:

‘Expanding our testing programme to include antibody testing for HSC staff will identify staff who are likely to have had COVID-19.

Anyone testing positive is interviewed to try to establish when they are most likely to have had the virus and what symptoms, if any, they experienced. This information will add to our understanding of the spread of the virus on Island.

There is still uncertainty about what the presence of antibodies means for a person’s immunity to future infection. We have to assume at this stage that those with antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 could be infected again and could pass infection on to other people.’

Ends

Notes to Media

Antibody tests are used to detect antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus to see if a person has **previously** had the virus. The test works by taking a blood sample and testing for the presence of antibodies which are part of the body's immune response to the virus.

Antibody tests differ to virus swab (PCR) tests, which test for **current** infection.

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