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Public Health
Wales

Freedom of Information request to Public Health Wales

FOI Reference:	FOI 511
Date request received	16th November 2020
Date information is due to be sent	14th December 2020

Information Requested:

My freedom of information request concerns the Covid-19 testing being used to identify cases of this specific Coronavirus in Wales.

Firstly, can you confirm that the PCR test is being used in Wales to test both hospital & community cases of the virus? If not what test is being used in both settings?

Secondly, if the PCR test is being used, what cycle threshold number (Ct) is being used during each assay?

Thirdly, when reporting on positive test results is the Ct value documented with the results, i.e. how many cycle thresholds is took for the virus to be identified or does every test conducted use a standard or fixed Ct value?

Information provided for the answer:

Thank you for your recent request.

1 .

The samples types and swabs we use in Wales are dry throat swabs. The laboratory has been using this sample type for the last 10 years. These are the sample types that we use on our UKAS accredited respiratory assays. The method is published in Journal of Virological method

2

The real-time PCR assays in use in Wales for COVID-19 diagnostics all run for 45 cycles however, the cycle number where the sample is defined as RNA NOT DETECTED varies by platform and target gene detected by the system. This is defined by the manufacturer. One platform (Hologic) is isothermal, this means it does not cycle through temperature changes in the same way as the real-time PCR systems, therefore CT values are not reported by this system.

3. I am liaising with the relevant department and will provide an update as soon as I am able.

I would advise that Public Health Wales is facing unprecedented challenges during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and whilst we are endeavouring to complete Freedom of Information responses within deadlines delays may be experienced. Further information regarding this is available from the Information Commissioners Website, the link for which is provided below.

<https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/icos-blog-on-its-information-rights-work/>

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of the decision, you should write to the Corporate Complaints Manager, Public Health Wales NHS Trust, 3, Number 2, Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint or review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Trust. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner for Wales

2nd Floor
Churchill House
Churchill Way
Cardiff
CF10 2HH

Telephone: 029 2067 8400

Email: wales@ico.org.uk

