**Freedom of Information request to Public Health Wales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOI Reference:</th>
<th>FOI 511</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date request received</td>
<td>16th November 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date information is due to be sent</td>
<td>14th December 2020</td>
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**Information Requested:**

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 very 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 this sample type using for the last 10 years. These are the samples types that we use on our UKAS accredited respiratory assays. The method is a published in Journal of Virological methods

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. Is there a specific issue that you would like to explore further?"

3. We do not directly report the CT values, but have a category of ‘LOW POSITIVE’ that is reported if the CT value is greater than 35. If Clinical or Health Protection colleagues require further information, the CT values are available, but the interpretation is through discussion with a clinical virology specialist.

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