

4 November 2021

Covid-19 Testing

Who is responsible for the Covid testing?

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Covid-19 Oversight Group is responsible for the Pillar 1 Covid-19 Testing facility, which is based at Knockbracken Healthcare Park.

Bernie Owens is lead Director for testing, as part of the Covid-19 Oversight Group.

Who is responsible for taking the testing kit from the test centres to the lab?

Belfast Trust's Transport Team has responsibility for taking completed tests to the Regional Virology Labs from the Testing Centre.

Who is responsible for testing in the lab?

The entire laboratory diagnostics process, be it molecular or serological testing in the Regional Virus Laboratory is undertaken by multidisciplinary teams including Medical Laboratory Assistants, Biomedical Scientists, Clinical Scientists and Medical Virologists.

Who, and what process is used, to determine if it is positive or negative and which variant it may be.

PCR tests for SARS CoV2 are carried out as per manufacturer's instructions, which are individual to the numerous different kits and platforms in use for SARS CoV2 testing. The determination of positive or negative results are based on a number of criteria, including the Ct value, fluorescence level, shape of amplification curve, internal control and quality control performance.

Variant determination is done using specific assays, which target numerous specific genetic mutations, as per national determination. This is followed by next generation sequencing to confirm.