



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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**By email**

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Our ref: 10/12/hf/2027

7 January 2021

Dear John Piper

**Re: Cycle Threshold (CT) values used in RT-PCR tests**

Thank you for your request received on 10 December 2020 addressed to Public Health England (PHE). In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that PHE partly holds the information you have specified.

***Request***

***Please could you supply the maximum Cycle Threshold (CT) values used in RT-PCR tests for every Covid testing centre in the UK.***

***Response***

The maximum number of thermal cycles will depend of the type of test being used. PHE can confirm it holds information on tests used by PHE laboratories. However, to retrieve and extract the information to respond to your request as it stands would exceed the cost limit of £600. The cost limit is calculated at a staff rate time at £25 per person per hour working for 24 hours to respond to the request. Therefore, this information is exempt in accordance with Section 12 of the Act.

PHE does not hold information on testing kits used by non-PHE laboratories. These laboratories have a statutory duty to report positive cases to PHE, but they are not obliged to advise PHE which tests they are using. These laboratories do not share the maximum number of thermal cycles being used in their tests.

Under Section 16 of the Act, public authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance. Accordingly, you may wish to consult:

- The following link for PHE assessment of laboratory tests and assays:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-phe-assessment-of-laboratory-tests-and-assays>
- The manufacturers of the tests for information about the cycle thresholds
- The Department of Health and Social Care who oversee the government's testing programme. They can be contacted at  
[freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk)

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to me in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing [foi@phe.gov.uk](mailto:foi@phe.gov.uk).

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by calling the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113, visiting the ICO's website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) or writing to the ICO at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely  
FOI Team