

ANTIBODY TESTING ON CHILDREN

What do parents and young people across England think is acceptable and feasible in the name of research?

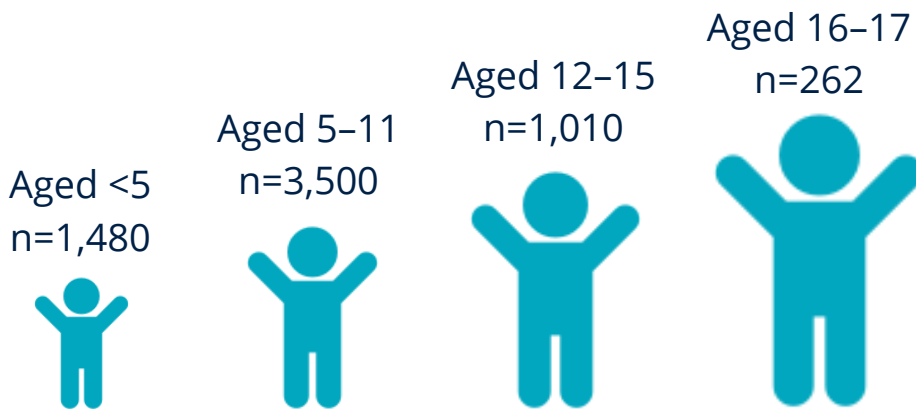


Between 18-21 June 2020

4,290

shared their thoughts via an online survey

Parents/carers of children:



Young people:



Willing to perform...

...An antibody test on their child / themselves to see if they'd had COVID-19.

95% (of 4,019 responses)

87% (of 90 responses)

...A finger-prick antibody test for research purposes, even if the individual result is not reliable.

90% (of 3,366 responses)

88% (of 52 responses)



Willing to perform finger-prick antibody test at home if:

- Parent is confident and willing to do it themselves, or with support
- The child is comfortable being tested by their parent or used to similar tests being done
- Household is choosing to isolate or someone is shielding
- Child would be more stressed by going somewhere else



Prefer for somebody else to do the finger-prick antibody test if:

- Parent unable to perform test, e.g. single parent, child more accepting of medical professionals
- Parent unwilling to do it, e.g. fear of hurting child, damaging trust
- Parent wants the reassurance of the test being done correctly first time so it won't need to be repeated

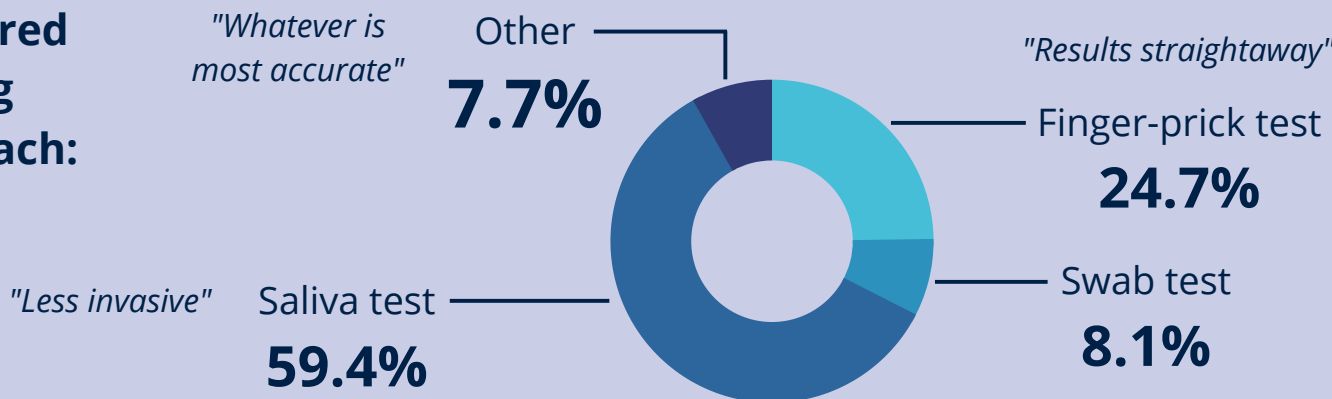
Common issues expected with home-based finger-prick testing on children included:

1. Child wriggling
2. Not getting enough blood due to small fingers
3. Collecting and transferring blood to testing stick
4. Hurting child
5. Fear of needles or blood / child getting upset
6. Explaining purpose of test and navigating consent

Parents were generally happy for the test to be carried out anywhere, by anyone, providing:

1. It's somewhere safe, local, easy to access, ideally known to the child and a parent can be present throughout
2. The person is a trained (ideally medical) professional, who has been DBS-checked and is not known to the child

Preferred testing approach:



Key suggestions & considerations

Parents need to be reassured that finger-prick testing is necessary and worthwhile by explaining how widespread testing helps, even if individual results are not reliable

Instructions could be put onto one page to make it easier for parents doing the test without help, plus more pictures, characters or makaton symbols to make it more accessible

If testing happens at schools, parents must be allowed to be present and it should ideally be open to any child, including siblings not going to that school or those who are home-educated