### Supplementary Table 1 – Baseline demographic and clinical characteristics of testing in the study population\*

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|  | Send-away RT-PCRs  (n=55) | Early on-site RT-PCRs  (n= 49) | Established on-site PCRs  (n=116) | P-value |
| Age – yr, median (IQR) | 63.6 (43-74) | 58 (36-73) | 65 (42-80) | 0.419 |
| Male sex – no. (%) | 33 (60) | 25 (51) | 61(53) | 0.587 |
| Overseas Travel1 – no. (%) | 15 (27) | 5 (4) | 2 (4) | <0.001 |
| ICU2 – no. (%) | 17 (31) | 11 (22) | 10 (9) | <0.001 |
| Mechanical ventilation2 – no. (%) | 5 (9) | 5 (10) | 2 (2) | 0.024 |
| **Treating team**  General Medicine – no. (%)  Respiratory – no. (%)  Infectious Diseases – no. (%)  Other medical unit – no. (%)  Surgical unit – no. (%)  Paediatric unit – no. (%)  Psychiatry – no. (%) | 35 (63.6)  4 (7.3)  4 (7.3)  5 (9.1)  2 (3.6)  5 (9.1)  0 | 25 (51.0)  7 (14.3)  4 (8.2)  9 (18.4)  0  4 (8.2)  0 | 53 (45.7)  6 (5.2)  1 (0.9)  27 (23.3)  13 (11.2)  13 (11.2)  3 (2.6) |  |
| **Final diagnoses**  Other respiratory virus – no. (%)  Pneumonia – no. (%)  Exacerbation of airways disease – no. (%)  Urinary tract infection – no. (%)  Cardiac disease – no. (%)  Fever of unknown origin – no. (%)  Other known infection – no. (%)  Unknown or other diagnosis – no. (%) | 15 (27.3)  21 (38.2)  6 (10.9)  2 (3.6)  2 (3.6)  2 (3.6)  5 (9.1)  2 (3.6) | 7 (14.3)  18 (36.7)  5 (10.2)  1 (2.0)  3 (6.1)  3 (6.1)  2 (4.1)  10 (20.4) | 25 (21.6)  25 (21.6)  12 (10.3)  4 (3.4)  7 (6.0)  20 (17.2)  10 (8.6)  13 (11.2) |  |
| \*Patients with multiple tests were included in the group of their first recorded test for demographic purposes. Differences in sample numbers occurred as 21 patients had two or more RT-PCRs performed in the study period (two RT-PCRs n=20, three RT-PCRs n=1); and four patients had two separate isolation periods  1Overseas travel taken in the last 14 days prior to admission  2ICU admission or mechanical ventilation at any time during the index admission. | | | | |