

From NHSL Laboratory Medicine (Virology)

Dear Colleagues –

Re: COVID-19 testing

You will all be aware that the number of cases of Covid-19 is increasing. As a result of the change in testing protocols to include patients admitted with respiratory illness, the Virology laboratory needs your help with the following approach:

1/

At this time, samples received in the Virology laboratory (level 2, RIE) by **9am** will be resultated later that day; the approach will be kept under review.

2/

All samples received for respiratory virus PCR (VTS) are being tested for Covid-19 automatically; please don't send separate/duplicate samples.

3/

We are processing samples as quickly as we can; please don't call the laboratories asking to check whether we've received your sample **as that will divert staff away from testing.**

4/

All results are authorised and available in TRAK as soon as they are ready, and all positive results are telephoned to the requesting clinician/ward as well as being reported in TRAK.

5/

Please don't call the laboratories to ask if/when results are ready **as that will divert staff away from testing.**

6/

Ensure requests are done via TRAK or ICE – or, as a last resort, send a sample with a paper request form. The form needs to be complete and clear (including sender's location) and the patient details must match those on the sample. If we receive incomplete or mismatched requests, they take far longer to process, delay our test runs and, eventually, we may have to start discarding them.

7/

Please follow the instructions for the transport and packaging of samples as per the flowchart below.

We would be very grateful to you for helping us along the lines above as sample numbers increase and we rapidly expand our test capacity.

With kind regards,

M Gray
NHSL Service Manager

I Johannessen
NHSL Director of NHSL Laboratory Medicine

How to transport COVID-19 samples to the laboratory

