

# Scottish National Viral Haemorrhagic Fever Test Service (SNVTS)

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## Scottish National Viral Haemorrhagic Fever Test Service

*In partnership with the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory at Porton Down*

### Brief User Guide

The **Scottish National Viral Haemorrhagic Fever Test Service (SNVTS)** is based at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and offers Ebola, Marburg, Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever, Lassa Fever, Dengue Fever and Malaria testing (by molecular assays) to NHS Scotland in close collaborative partnership with the **Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory (RIPL)** at Porton Down, Wiltshire, England. SNVTS operates within 7-day laboratory working hours with on-call capacity for testing of urgent 'high possibility of VHF' samples using molecular (real-time PCR) approaches.

#### Approach

In line with UK arrangements, Scottish Doctors attending patients with **possible VHF** should contact their **local Infection Consultant** (Infectious Diseases Physician, Consultant Virologist or Consultant Microbiologist) for initial case discussion and advice. If such discussion merits further VHF assessment, the local Infection Consultant should contact the **UK Imported Fever Service (IFS)** on **08 44 77 88 99 0** (RIPL Doctor On Call: 07789 031 672).

The **IFS Doctor** will assist with risk assessment (including need for, and urgency of, sample testing and immediate management). If the agreed outcome supports VHF testing of samples, the **IFS Doctor** will approach **SNVTS** by contacting the **Duty/ On Call Consultant Virologist** (the SNVTS Consultant On Call) at the **Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh** through **0131 536 1000** (hospital switchboard) who will confirm details with the local Infection Consultant and instruct testing.

Please note that SNVTS will **NOT** accept samples for urgent VHF testing unless such an approach has been agreed in conversation between the local Infection Consultant and IFS. Equally, IFS will advise on a case-by-case basis whether samples may be sent as Category A or B shipments.

Any case(s) of possible VHF in Scotland should be notified immediately by the **local Infection Consultant** to the **local Public Health Team** who will inform **Public Health Scotland** and **Scottish Government** with a view to consider convening a Problem Assessment Group/ Incident Management Team meeting (for Membership and details of approach, please refer to Scottish national guidance). Equally, the **local Infection Prevention and Control Service** should be notified immediately.

#### Samples

**One 4.5 mL serum separation gel blood tube** and **two 4.5 mL anti-coagulated EDTA blood tubes** should be forwarded for testing at SNVTS alongside a completed **SNVTS test request form**. If possible, a **urine sample** should also be included (but collection of it should not delay blood sample shipment).

Please note that samples to be sent to SNVTS for testing should **NOT** be processed in any manner by the local hospital team/ laboratory. Instead, the samples above should be sent **intact** and **unprocessed**.

There is **no** cost incurred to Scottish Health Boards for VHF testing at SNVTS.

## Transport

The **IFS Doctor** will advise whether samples should be sent to SNVTS by **Category A or B** transport although it is expected that most samples may be sent by the latter (apart from likely cases of 'high possibility of VHF' as determined by **IFS**).

For appropriate **packaging** of samples, please refer to HSE guidance on the following website:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/blood-borne-viruses/transportation-of-infectious-substances.htm>

Sample collection, packaging and transport arrangements (including cost incurred) are the responsibility of each Scottish Health Board that should ensure an agreement is in place already with an approved carrier. However, whenever such arrangements are not in place, SNVTS may assist by instructing courier collection directly (in partnership with the requesting Health Board); the cost of such instructions will be met by SNVTS (and reclaimed in due course from NHS Scotland).

The local hospital team/ laboratory should provide SNVTS by telephone with **details of the sample shipment** (driver identity, vehicle registration, courier organisation, tracking number, contact telephone number and estimated time of arrival at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh). If SNVTS instructs collection directly (see above), the test service will gather such data from the courier.

For **Category A** transport, please note that it is a Police Scotland requirement to check and record (at place of origin and destination) the identity and courier license of the driver overseeing such shipments. Equally, it is a Police Scotland requirement that such shipments include an inner security seal as well as two outer security seals – one on top and another on bottom of packaging (sealing any access points).

For Scotland, approved Category A couriers include **Eagle Couriers** (Scotland Ltd) on 0845 123 1230 and **Marken** on 0131 333 4012.

Please note that hospitals/ laboratories that are likely to send specimens for VHF testing should discuss with their local procurement team **in advance** to agree appropriate arrangements with the courier company they intend to use; alternatively, the adopted approach may be one of requesting that SNVTS arrange courier collection directly (see above).

## Test Results

The **SNVTS Consultant On Call** (the Consultant Virologist On Call) will convey VHF test results to **IFS** and the **local Infection Consultant** as soon as they become available (for urgent VHF tests, within 6 hours from receipt at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh) and, whenever possible, a formal test result e-report will be issued at that time to the local infection laboratory.

The **local Infection Consultant** should inform the **local Public Health Team** of the results, who will update Public Health Scotland and Scottish Government.

In the event of a **VHF-positive** test result, the **local Public Health Team** should lead an Incident Management Team in liaison with Public Health Scotland and Scottish Government with additional input and support from local and national agencies (including IFS/ RIPL and SNVTS) as appropriate. Under such circumstances, the **IFS** will advise on further case management.

In the event of a **VHF-negative** test result, the **local Infection Consultant** should liaise with **IFS** with a view to review the case and consider other pathogens that may present in a clinical manner similar to VHF.

SNVTS may forward samples received for VHF testing to RIPL for quality assurance and extended testing (if required).

## Information for Courier

Once at Little France, Edinburgh, please follow the signs to the **South Entrance** of the **Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh** and drive to **Car Park D**. At the barrier entrance to the car park, please use the intercom to gain entry. Once parked, please proceed to **Laboratory Reception** on **level 2** of the Royal Infirmary building. Laboratory Reception is manned at all times and there is a buzzer for gaining the attention of laboratory staff. During the night, the reception grill may be down, but the buzzer is accessible at all times.

Upon arrival of laboratory staff, please hand over the sample parcel showing **ID badge** and **courier license** so that the laboratory may record all such details. Please do **NOT** leave sample parcel unattended at Laboratory Reception.

Once delivered, laboratory staff will place the parcel in the designated area ('Virology Bench') for the attention of the Duty/ On Call Biomedical Scientist in Virology.

## Useful web links

Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) VHF guidance:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/354640/VHF\\_guidance\\_document\\_updated\\_links.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354640/VHF_guidance_document_updated_links.pdf)

Public Health Scotland (PHS) VHF guidance:

<http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/viral-haemorrhagic-fevers-vhf/>

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) VHF guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/viral-haemorrhagic-fever-algorithm-and-guidance-on-management-of-patients>

## Brief Overview of the Initial Steps of Approach

**Attending Doctor** risk assesses case of possible VHF with **local Infection Consultant**  
(Infectious Diseases Physician, Consultant Virologist or Consultant Microbiologist)

If considered risk of possible VHF,  
**local Infection Consultant** informs **local Public Health Team** and  
**local Infection Prevention & Control Team** and liaises with the **UK Imported Fever Service (IFS)** on  
**08 44 77 88 99 0**

If agreed risk of possible VHF,  
**IFS** liaises with the **Duty/ On Call Consultant Virologist** (the SNVTS Consultant On Call)  
at the **Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh** on  
**0131 536 1000**  
who will confirm details and instruct testing