



Ref: FOIA Reference 2023/24-460

Date: 27th October 2023

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 16th October 2023 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) regarding blood cultures

As of 1st November 2014 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) manages two hospital sites – Royal Stoke University Hospital, and County Hospital (Stafford). Therefore the response below is for the two sites combined from that date where appropriate.

Q1 This is a FOI request relating to the microbiology laboratory service and blood cultures. data should be easily available by interrogating laboratory information systems or from audit reports.

1. Please table the hospitals or other acute sites currently submitting blood cultures and for each site-

i) Are blood cultures incubated and/or processed on site or sent to a microbiology laboratory off site?

ii) If incubated or processed off site, what is the distance in miles between the site and the offsite laboratory?

iii) How many blood culture sets were submitted from each site in 2022/23?

iv) Number of bed days for all patients per site

	Name of acute site	Blood incubated on- site?	Blood Processed on site?	Distance to off-site lab in miles	No. cultures submitted 2022/2023	Number of bed days 2022/23

		Y/N	Y/N		Adults and paeds	
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						

Comments:

A1 See below:

	Name of acute site	Blood incubated on- site? Y/N	Blood Processed on site? Y/N	Distance to off- site lab in miles	No. cultures submitted 2022/2023 Adults and paeds	Number of bed days 2022/23
1.	Royal Stoke University Hospital (University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust)	Y	Y	0	28959	463748* (UHNM Combined figures)
2.	County Hospital (University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust)	N	N	18	3848	
3.	Haywood Hospital (Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust)	N	N	5	183	47242
4.	Harplands Hospital (Staffordshire Combined	N	N	1	10	N/A

	Health)					
5.	Leighton Hospital (Mid Cheshire NHS Foundation Trust)	N	N	17	9025	245546
6.	Macclesfield District General Hospital (East Cheshire NHS Trust)	N	N	22	5396	119981

Q2 Does the Trust follow the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (SMI S12) in relation to Blood Cultures? YES/NO

3. Do you undertake formal compliance audits of the recommended pre-analytical standard for blood cultures of a four hour TAT from collection to incubation? YES/NO

4. What percentage of blood culture sets achieved this standard in the year 2022/23 at each site.

If full compliance with the pre analytical standard cannot be met, are clinicians made aware of the risk via a statement in the report on specimens which encountered delay?

	Name of site	% achieving 4-hr TAT	Delayed incubation reported Y/N
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Comments:

A2 See below:

Does the Trust follow the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (SMI S12) in relation to Blood Cultures? = **YES**

3. Do you undertake formal compliance audits of the recommended pre-analytical standard for blood cultures of a four hour TAT from collection to incubation? **Not currently, we have recently replaced the Laboratory computer system and introduced laboratory automation in microbiology; we have had to prioritise resource to these projects.**

4. What percentage of blood culture sets achieved this standard in the year 2022/23 at each site.

If full compliance with the pre analytical standard cannot be met, are clinicians made aware of the risk via a statement in the report on specimens which encountered delay? **Not currently; we are looking to build rules into the new LIMS to add comments.**

	Name of site	% achieving 4-hr TAT	Delayed incubation reported Y/N
1.	Royal Stoke	85	N
2.	County	47	N
3.	Macclesfield	47	N
4.	Leighton	41	N

Comments:

Microbiology service operates 24/7 from RSUH site (commenced Nov 2021). Hourly transport operates during 7am-8pm and with 2 hourly overnight collections. On-going projects with IP teams and Sepsis Groups to encourage wards to treat blood cultures as urgent and to send specimens to the collection points to improve transit times.

Q3 What is the population served by the Trust?

A3 See below:

UHNM (RSUH and County Hospital): Approx.672000
Macclesfield District General Hospital: Approx.132400
Mid-Cheshire NHS Trust: Approx.260000

Q4 What was the total expenditure on laboratory services (directorate of pathology) as a percentage of total Trust expenditure in the year 2022/23?

A4 3.7% for UHNM

Q5 Please append a copy of your blood culture protocol or policy or other document which informs clinical staff when they should take a blood culture.

A5 No formal policy for when to take blood cultures as this is a clinical decision. Sepsis 6 pathway is used and information about blood culture bottle types and fill volumes available on Pathology Website

*Please note that any individuals identified do not give consent for their personal data to be processed for the purposes of direct marketing.

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An anonymised copy of this request can be found on the Trust's disclosure log, please note that all requests can be found at the following link: <http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/aboutus/Statutory-Policies-and-Procedures/Pages/Freedom-of-Information-Disclosure-Log.aspx>

This letter confirms the completion of this request. A log of this request and a copy of this letter will be held by the Trust.

If you have any queries related to the response provided please in the first instance contact my office.

Should you have a complaint about the response or the handling of your request, please also contact my office to request a review of this. If having exhausted the Trust's FOIA complaints process you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and request an assessment of the manner in which the Trust has managed your request.

The Information Commissioner may be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or via www.ico.org.uk.

Yours,



Rachel Montinaro
Data Security and Protection Manager - Records