



Ref: FOIA Reference 2024/25-633

Date: 17th February 2025

Email foi@uhnm.nhs.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 11th December 2024 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) Blood Test Study

Q1 The purpose of this FOI request is to discover the size of a national problem. At present approximately 80% of tubes that arrive in pathology have to be manually re-labelled in order for the blood tubes to be read by the analyser. This causes expense to hospitals, delays blood results and can lead to errors. Your cooperation to help me collect these data will be invaluable and I thank you for your time. You will probably need to address these questions to the Pathology Specimens Reception Manager.

I would like to request the following information for the period 2021-2022 or 2022-2023, whichever is more readily available.

Names of hospitals under your NHS Trust

A1 Please see below for the names of hospitals under our NHS Trust.

North Midlands and Cheshire Pathology Services operates pathology services across Staffordshire and Mid/East Cheshire
Royal Stoke University Hospital
County Hospital
Haywood Hospital (MPFT)
Leighton Hospital
Macclesfield DGH

Q2 Does your hospital perform blood tests or are they outsourced to an external laboratory?

- a. Hospital based tests**
- b. External laboratory (please name)**

A2 Please see below and the attached spreadsheet:

- a. Hospital based tests YES 95%
- b. External laboratory (please name)

Some specialist tests are outsourced. We use multiple NHS labs across England as detailed in the attached spreadsheet.

**Q3 How many blood tubes are received in pathology reception each year?
Many labs know the actual number and if so please state.**

e.g. In 2023, Our lab received 3.4 million tubes (please amend with actual number if known)

If not known, please estimate the number.

- a. Less than 500,000**
- b. 500,000 – 1,000,000**
- c. 1,000,000 – 2,500,000**
- d. 2,500,000 – 5,000,000**
- e. >5,000,000**

A3 At the Trust our lab received >8,000,000 tubes during 2022/23

Q4 If you do not know the answer to (3). How many patients have blood tests in your laboratory each year.

Many labs know the actual number and if so please state.

e.g. In 2023, Our lab received blood test requests for 1.2 million patients (please amend with actual number if known)

If not known, please estimate the number.

- a. Less than 500,000**
- b. 500,000 – 1,000,000**
- c. 1,000,000 – 2,500,000**
- d. 2,500,000 – 5,000,000**
- e. >5,000,000**

A4 Not applicable.

Q5 Roughly what % of blood tests arrive from Primary Care and Secondary care respectively?

Primary Care X%
Secondary Care X%

A5 Please see below % of blood tests arrive from Primary Care and Secondary care respectively:

Primary Care 39%
Secondary Care 61%

Q6 Roughly what % of all total blood tests arriving to your reception need re-labelling so that the barcodes can be read by the analyser?

A6 At the Trust we do not currently use barcoding at source. We generate laboratory number barcode stickers in the laboratory when electronic order comms and manual requests are

booked into the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). This is applied to the blood tube by pathology staff; hence we do not experience a high failure rate.

Q7 Roughly what % of blood tubes that arrive from Primary or Secondary Care need to be re-labelled so that the barcodes can be read by the analyser.

Primary Care:	X% need to be re-labelled before analysis
Secondary Care:	X% need to be re-labelled before analysis

A7 At the Trust we do not currently use barcoding at source. We generate laboratory number barcode stickers in the laboratory when electronic order comms and manual requests are booked into the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). This is applied to the blood tube by pathology staff; hence we do not experience a high failure rate.

*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,

L Carlisle

Leah Carlisle
Head of Data, Security & Protection and Health Records
Data Protection Officer