

13 March 2020

Dear Colleague,

We felt it important to provide an update on the provision of H&I testing services in view of the emerging situation regarding COVID-19.

NHSBT H&I laboratories will continue to test blood samples referred from potential transplant recipients and donors as normal. We request that any samples referred from patients or potential donors with confirmed or suspected infection are clearly identified as high risk samples on the test request forms. Samples and request forms should be labelled "high risk" as should the outside of the container. Packaging must comply with UN3373 (the sample must be properly sealed, and placed in a sealed plastic bag, with an adsorbent pad, placed in a protective container such as a sample box or plastic tub).

In most cases we expect to be able to process samples from patients with confirmed infection following appropriate risk assessment but we may need to discuss and assess the clinical needs of the patient in deciding which tests to do, and some techniques may not be used for samples containing COVID-19.

Please note that there will be no processing of buccal swab or saliva samples from any individuals unless confirmed negative for coronavirus. These are classed as respiratory tract samples requiring category 3 containment for processing and we do not have access to the necessary facilities. Any buccal swab or saliva samples received will be discarded unless arrangements are made with the laboratory in advance to quarantine the samples for 14 days.

If you have any questions about these arrangements, please do contact me or the H&I Consultant in your local NHSBT H&I laboratory.

Kind regards,

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