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Survey result overview:

- Respondents were mostly positive about the service provided by MSL, but satisfaction levels have dropped slightly.
- Areas for MSL improvement include report formats, communicating delays to testing, communication of results and access to results outside of emailed reports.

1. Introduction:

Microbiology Services Laboratory (MSL) is committed to a process of on-going evaluation and improvement to ensure that the services provided by the Laboratory meet the needs and requirements of users. In order to monitor user experience and satisfaction levels MSL undertakes a User Satisfaction Survey each year. It aids in highlighting departmental strengths and weaknesses and provides an opportunity for service users to discuss areas for service improvement and any other comments.

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2. Methodology:

The survey was launched on the 8th of July 2025, using Microsoft 365 Forms, with the closing date of the 29th of August 2025. The link for the survey was emailed to a dedicated group of email address, as well as key individuals. Key individuals were requested to pass on the survey to an appropriate person if they were not the most suitable person to respond. Like last year, just one survey was sent out to all users of MSL services and the survey was open for two months to encourage feedback from a greater number of users.

The survey comprised 11 mandatory questions, with the main focus of the survey to seek User opinions on the Laboratory User Guide, turnaround times (TAT), assistance with advice and queries, reporting mechanisms and overall satisfaction. These 11 questions were included in last year's survey and will allow MSL to gauge if our performance has decreased or increased for each area. Four additional questions, which were optional, asked for specific feedback on the content of the User guide, referral forms, reports and general MSL feedback. The final question allowed users to leave their contact details for specific feedback to any comments raised.

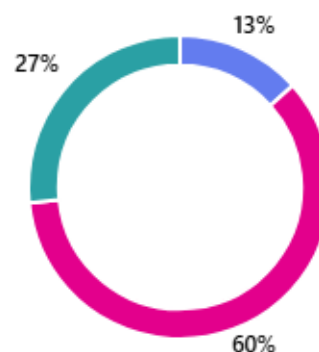
In order to receive more meaningful responses and feedback to our survey, we included responses that captured either a satisfaction level on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being most dissatisfied and 5 being most satisfied), or specific choice answers (e.g. yes/no or always/most of the time/rarely/never).

A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix.

3. Survey Results:

Q: Please select which section of the Microbiology Services Laboratory (MSL) you use?

● MSL-Bacteriology	2
● MSL-Virology	9
● Both	4



The survey was sent to 70 User email addresses from 47 different functions/customers. Overall, we received responses from 15 Users, which is a reduction from last year when 24 responses were received. We saw a decrease in the number of responses from all users, including users of Bacteriology services (5 in 2024), Virology services (13 in 2024) and users of both MSLV and MSLB (6 in 2024). It is unclear why less stakeholders responded this year, when more time was given to complete the survey like last year, with periodic reminders (which did encourage additional users to complete the survey each time). It's possible it's because the survey was released over the UK school summer holiday period when more personnel take annual leave to support childcare responsibilities. Next year (2026), the survey will be conducted slightly earlier (e.g. June-July) to ensure optimal uptake.

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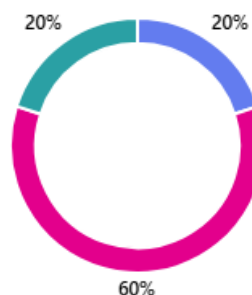
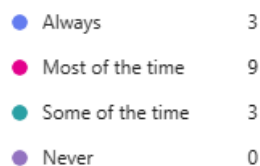
Q: The Laboratory User guide provides clear and concise information for requesting MSL services?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	1
3	0	0	1
4	3	0	2
5	6	2	0

Overall scores for this question have reduced from 4.5 (2024) to 4.33 this year. MSLB users reported high scores (all 5) and MSLV scores were comparable for this question, compared with last year. But users of both MSL services reported a reduction in score compared with last year (now 2-4 vs 3-5). One user stated not seeing a User guide (these are distributed to all users so perhaps are not cascade within departments) and that it would be helpful if test TAT was included as well as which days of the week tests are performed. Individual test TAT is included in the MSLB user guide, but it is not as explicit in the MSLV user guide, due to the combination of tests that comprise Screening and/or Confirmatory testing. In addition, the days that each test is performed can change week by week, depending on the samples received within MSLV. However, MSL takes on board this feedback and will determine how this can be added to the next version of the user guide to improve clarity of our users.

Q: The turnaround time meets the needs of our service?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
Never	0	0	0
Some of the time	2	0	1
Most of the time	5	1	3
Always	2	1	0
Responses (total)	9	2	4

The drop in number of respondents this year will have impacted the results, however, it's clear that turnaround times do not satisfy our users as much as they did last year. A reduction in satisfaction can be seen for Virology users (most of the time and always equally favoured in 2024) and users of both laboratories (a number of users said always in 2024), while Bacteriology users appear similarly satisfied with turnaround times to last year. We know from direct (Virology) user feedback that some users are not satisfied with the TAT of the UKHSA HHV8 testing, which is referred and reported by MSL. We feedback these concerns to UKHSA when raised.

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Q: How satisfied are you with the usefulness of technical and clinical advice provided?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	1	0	1
4	4	0	2
5	4	2	1
Responses (total)	9	2	4

All 100% of responders gave this question a satisfaction level of 3 or more, with a similar proportion of users scoring this question 4 and 5. Though the numbers are small, there has been a slight improvement in scores for Bacteriology users (all scoring 5), but for Virology users and users of both labs there was a slight reduction in those scoring this question 5.

Q: How satisfied are you that your email/telephone enquiries are dealt with efficiently and effectively by the laboratory?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	1	0	1
4	6	0	3
5	2	2	0
Responses (total)	9	2	4

All 100% of responders gave this question a satisfaction level of 3 or more. However, largest proportion of users scored this question a 4, whereas last year the majority of users scored this question 5. Similar to the previous question, Virology users and users of both labs observe a decrease in favourable scoring, whereas Bacteriology increased slightly.

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Q: How satisfied are you with the ease of use of the referral/request forms?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	5	0	4
5	4	2	0
Responses (total)	9	2	4

All 100% of responders gave this question a satisfaction level of 4 or more, however, the proportion of users scoring 4 or 5 has switched since last year when most users scored this question a 5. There has been a slight improvement in Bacteriology user scores with both scoring this a 5, whereas, users of both labs have not scored this question a 5 at all.

We asked our users if they felt anything was missing from the request forms and one user responded that they tend to email the request in with patient identifiable data included to link the test request to a sample. As this user is anonymous we cannot feedback directly, however, feedback to this statement has been included in the survey comments in section 4.

Q: Does the portfolio of tests provided meet the needs of your Service?

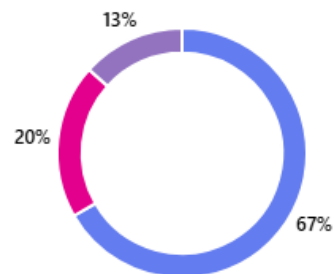
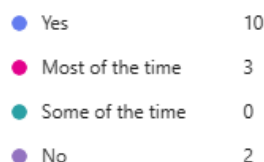


	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
No	0	0	0
Partially	0	0	1
Yes	9	2	3
Responses (total)	9	2	4

All users agreed the portfolio of tests provided by MSL completely or partially meets their needs. As in 2024, Virology users test needs were met 100%. The test provided to Bacteriology users has improved with both users agreeing their test needs is met, which is an improvement on last year. For one user of both labs, their needs are only partially met, potentially due to testing currently outsourced to external reference laboratories. Unfortunately they did not feed back in any comments where we could improve, but we encourage all our users to feedback this information to us or let us know if there are any additional tests they are interested in.

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Q: Are the results in the laboratory report presented in a clear manner?

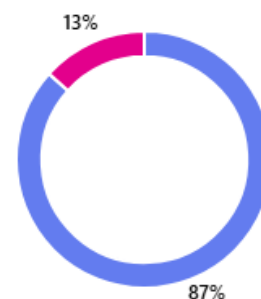
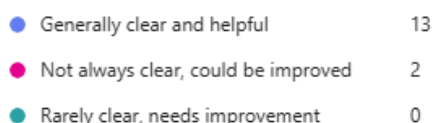


	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
No	1	0	1
Some of the time	0	0	0
Most of the time	1	0	2
Yes	7	2	1
Responses (total)	9	2	4

In total, 10/15 responders replied to this question with yes. This is a decrease on last year, likely due to Virology users and users of both labs scoring this question as no (n=2) or most of the time (n=3), whereas last year these users scored this question as 'yes'. There has been an improvement on Bacteriology scores for this question this year.

A Virology user noted the following regarding reports 'Reporting format is not very clear. the reactive/Positive results are reported in the same format as Non-Reactive/ Negative result. It is very helpful if this can be reported in the different colour or font which make more attention of the operator.' Feedback to this question is included in section 4 of this report.

Q: Regarding the utility and clarity of the report comments, do you find them: generally clear and helpful, not always clear could be improved, rarely clear needs improvement.



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
Rarely clear	0	0	0
Not always clear	1	0	1
Generally clear	8	2	3
Responses (total)	9	2	4

In total, 13/15 of users thought report comments were generally clear, with one Virology user and one user of both labs finding the comments not always clear. These results are very similar to last year's survey results, with just one Virology user scoring the question less favourably this year.

Three comments were received relating to this question about reports and report comments. One user asked for HIV RNA reports to specify that these results apply to both HIV 1 and HIV 2; a user of both labs stated that would be easier if the G-number was used as the identifier in email correspondence to facilitate finding reports; and a third user explained that it is not always clear if the sample has been referred for confirmatory testing. All Survey comments and MSL responses are detailed in section 4.

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Q: How satisfied are you with mechanisms for reporting results?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	2	0	0
4	5	1	4
5	2	1	0
Responses (total)	9	2	4

Overall, scoring for this question has dropped slightly for all users, with less scoring this question a 5. However, as 13/15 users scored this a 4 or 5, the majority of our users are satisfied with the current mechanism for reporting results.

A Bacteriology user included the following comment on reporting 'The current system for reporting results via email is good. However, it would be great if there was a separate system for reporting results which one could access outside of emails.' Feedback to this comment has been included in section 4 of this report.

Thought most of our users are satisfied, we know our reporting mechanism and report formats could be better. For many years we have been campaigning for a new LIMS system in MSL to better meet the needs of our users, but also streamline our processes to improve efficiency. MSL have embarked on a new LIMS project which may bring some improvements to the current reporting mechanisms in the short term, next 1-3 years. In the longer term, MSL will be included in a new Pathology LIMS project beyond this period.

Q: Overall, how satisfied are you with the Laboratory's services?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	4	0	4
5	5	2	0
Responses (total)	9	2	4

Compared with last year there has been a slight improvement in results for this question, with all users scoring 4 or 5. Whereas in 2024, one user scored this question 1. Results for Virology users and Bacteriology users are comparable to last year, but there is a slight decrease in scoring for users of both labs.

Two users commented on delays to results not always being clearly communicated to customers. Feedback to these comments is included in section 4 of this report.

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4. User Survey Comments and MSL responses

All comments received as part of this survey are summarised in table 1. Where responders included their contact details, we have emailed them directly to provide customer-specific feedback and also requested additional details in order to inform our services, where relevant. Otherwise, this report will be circulated to all our Users so they can see the survey findings and MSL responses to comments.

Table 1. Summary of User comments/suggestions

Comment received (feedback status in parenthesis)	MSL response
I don't ever recall seeing a user guide. It would be so helpful if we had timeframes for how long it takes to complete a test, or if tests are only run on certain days of the week, so that we could better estimate when results may be returned.	SPN201 and INF1060 are our user guides and these are distributed to key personnel within each department/function/organisation for cascade. They are also available to internal customers on the Controlled document library and to our external customers via the Hospitals and Science website. In Bacteriology all tests are performed daily, except for lot release testing and growth promotion, which are batched, to allow for samples received throughout the week from across the organisation. In Virology, Serology Screening is performed daily and NAT screening is performed 4-5 days/week depending on sample number. Primary and Secondary confirmatory tests is performed weekly, to enable samples from all customers to be batched. The order is dependent on number of referrals and any requests for urgent results. If urgent testing is performed this may impact the planned schedule of tests for the week.
We tend to email a request into you - rather than a request form. Attaching Donor PID.	Thank you for this comment. We just wanted to add some clarity to avoid any confusion. MSL only accept samples that are received with a sample request form. However, addition test requests may be emailed through to Virology, that were missed from the original request form, when additional risk factors (i.e. travel) have been identified. If we are misunderstood this comment, please get in touch with MSL managers to discuss.
(MSLV user): For HIV RNA, you do both 1 and 2, it would be good if you specify on the report HIV 1/2 RNA as currently it is only HIV RNA	Thank you for raising this suggestion. We will be updating the HIV RNA report to specify HIV 1/2. We ask our users to let MSL management know if there are any other changes to reports that they would like us to consider that better meets their needs.
The G number should be used as an identifier in email correspondence , as it makes finding and identifying reports difficult	In Virology it is not possible at this time to use the G number in email correspondence. The MSL lab number is used for all customers as the identifier. In Bacteriology, the MSL lab number or case number is used as identifier. With planned future development and implementation of a new LIMS, we will explore this as a report identification option.
It is not very clear if the sample has been refereed for confirmatory testing.	Thank you for this feedback. MSL is going to explore how the reports can be improved to make it clearer when samples have been referred for confirmatory testing.
Reporting format is not very clear. the reactive/Positive results are reported in the same format as Non-Reactive/ Negative result. It is very helpful if this can be reported in the different colour or font which make more attention of the operator.	Thank you for this feedback. MSL is going to explore how the reports can be improved to make it clearer when samples are reactive/positive.
(MSLV user): My only comment/request would be, to be notified of any delay in the reporting of a result that is expected to fall outside of the maximum TAT in the user guide. It's rare that we've had to chase up results but when we did it took longer than was originally anticipated and had to be followed up on again due to an error. The matter however was resolved on the day of the error discovery by the team.	Thank you for this feedback. MSL has reflected on this comment and appreciates that our response to delays is not always unified and we are working to improve this. We plan to have a CI event later this year to identify how we can respond to testing delays appropriately and proportionally, but also to ensure that our stakeholders are informed.

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Sometimes we don't always get an acknowledgment why a result is delayed, or indeed has been noted and is being processed. Dead silence. So it would be helpful to know if any delays are in process	
(MSLB user): Q.13 The current system for reporting results via email is good. However, it would be great if there was a separate system for reporting results which one could access outside of emails.	In Bacteriology all results are reported in Hematos. There is a view only user role available for Hematos users, but it would be helpful to discuss this further so that we can understand customer requirements. As together we may identify a more suitable way of reviewing results. We ask that any users interested in this contact MSL management directly to explore further.

MSL actions:

<i>MSL action</i>	<i>Action taken</i>	<i>Target date</i>
INF1060 to be updated to add clarity as to the tests performed daily and weekly	CR77094 raised against INF1060.	07JUL2026 (date of next review)
HIV RNA report to be updated to reflect test detects both HIV 1 and HIV 2	CR77095 raised against FRM3374	22SEP2026 (date of next review)
Virology reports to be updated to make it clearer when samples are referred for confirmatory testing	To be raised at next MSL-Virology Seniors meeting for discussion	15NOV2025
Virology reports to be updated to make it clearer when samples are reactive/positive	To be raised at next MSL-Virology Seniors meeting for discussion	15NOV2025
2026 survey to be performed earlier in the year to capture higher number of responses	Already discussed with deputy Quality Manager for action in May 2026 when the next survey is drafted.	31MAY2026

5. Analysis:

The survey was sent to 70 User email addresses from 47 different functions/customers: of which 15 users responded. This was a much lower response rate to last year, when we had 24 users respond following an extended survey period. It is possible that the timing of the survey (July – August inclusive) impacted the number of responses, due to more users taking time off during school holidays. However, the same period was used last year and we had the best response rate to date.

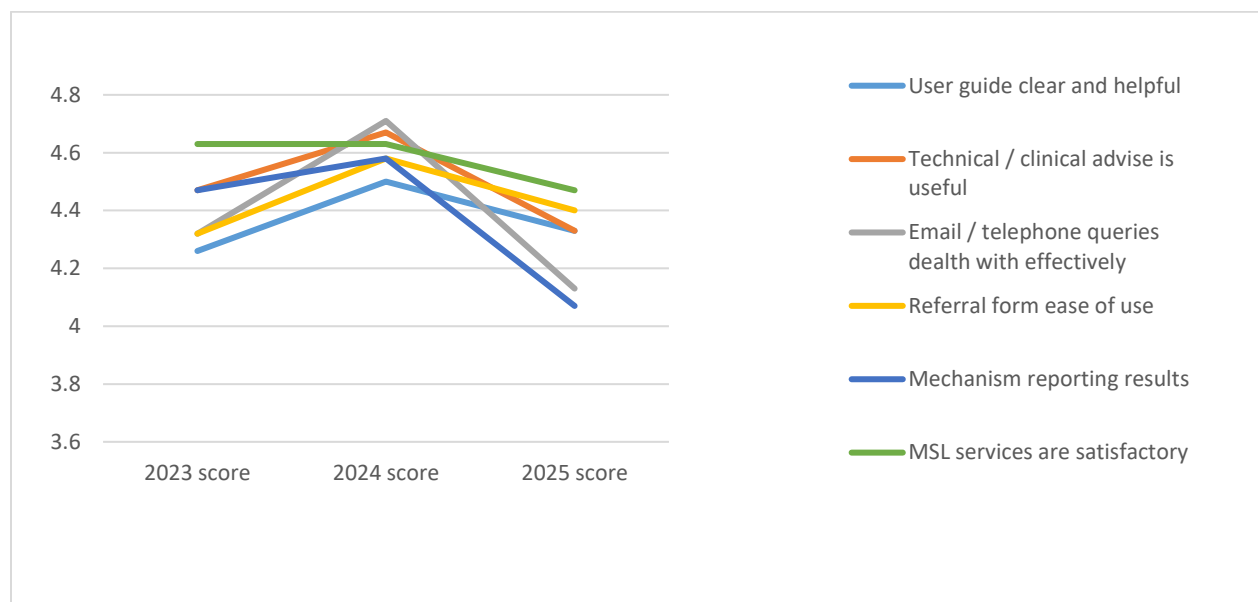
The User Survey and results have been shared with the department by email and will be shared in the monthly laboratory meetings for January 2025.

Overall, the response to our survey was positive, however, there was a clear reduction in the number of questions scoring a 5 or most favourably, with all average feedback scores decreasing from 2024 (see figure 1).

The lower number of user responses will likely have skewed survey results and reduced the average scores for each question. In addition, it's possible that users which consider the MSL service to be most satisfactory did not respond to the survey, as they felt they had nothing of concern to report. Similarly, it could be that those who did respond had areas of concern they wanted to highlight. Though this will negatively impact average scores and satisfaction levels reported, this is the most favourable option to MSL, as it means we receive constructive feedback on how we can improve our services.

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Figure 1: average feedback scores for 2023 - 2025 for key areas of the services provided by MSL



Common themes identified in responses to this year's survey relate to report format, delays in results and communication by MSL (relating to delays/sample receipt/confirmatory testing). MSL management and seniors have discussed these themes within the department and will take appropriate actions (see section 4) to improve these aspects of our service. We have also shared this report with all our staff for additional ideas to improve our service, but also so we can all be mindful of the service we provide to our customers.

All actions to be completed before our next User survey in 2026.

If users would like to discuss anything from this report further, then please contact the MSL management team for discussion.

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Appendix: Copy of MSL User Satisfaction Survey 2025:

- 1) *Please select which section of the Microbiology Services Laboratory (MSL) you use?*
- 2) *The laboratory user guide provides clear and concise information for requesting MSL services?*
- 3) *Is there any information you think is missing from the User guide that should be added? (optional)*
- 4) *The turnaround times meets the needs of our service?*
- 5) *How satisfied are you with the usefulness of technical and clinical advice provided?*
- 6) *How satisfied are you that your email/telephone enquiries are dealt with efficiently and effectively by the laboratory?*
- 7) *How satisfied are you with the ease of use of the referral/request forms?*
- 8) *Is there any information you think is missing from the referral forms that should be added? (optional)*
- 9) *Does the portfolio of tests provided meet the needs of your service?*
- 10) *Are the results in the laboratory report presented in a clear manner?*
- 11) *Regarding the utility and clarity of the report comments, do you find them: generally clear and helpful, not always clear could be improved or rarely clear needs improvement?*
- 12) *Is there any information you think is missing from the reports that should be added? (optional)*
- 13) *How satisfied are you with the mechanisms for reporting results?*
- 14) *Overall, how satisfied are you with the laboratory's service?*
- 15) *Are there any other comments you have for MSL, including feedback on any of the questions above? (optional)*
- 16) *Please include your contact details if you happy to discuss your responses with MSL and receive personal feedback*