Microbiology Services Laboratory – User Survey Report 2026

NHS Blood and Transplant

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Survey result overview:

- Overall user satisfaction with MSL services remained high, with most areas showing improvement compared with 2025, including technical and clinical advice, communication, referral forms, reporting mechanisms, and overall satisfaction. In addition, 100% of users who responded that the current test portfolio meets their needs, and most users who responded found the User Guide, referral forms, reports, and report comments clear and fit for purpose.
- Although the survey response rate was lower than in 2025 (11 (16%) responses compared with 15 (21%)), the feedback received continues to demonstrate strong user confidence in MSL services. A small number of suggestions for improvement were identified, primarily relating to the clarity of existing information, report traceability, and reporting processes. These will be considered as part of ongoing service improvement activities, including future User Guide reviews and planned LIMS developments.

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 of users. 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.

2. Methodology:

The survey was launched on the 02nd of July 2026, using Microsoft 365 Forms, with the closing date of the 04th September 2026. The link for the survey was emailed to identified group email addresses, 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, 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 comprises of 20 questions and was designed to gather feedback from users of the Microbiology Services Laboratory (MSL) to evaluate the quality, effectiveness, and suitability of its services and identify opportunities for improvement. Several questions from the previous year's survey had been included to allow direct comparison of results and help assess the impact of any improvements made since the last survey The survey focused on:

- **User guidance and information** – assessing whether the Laboratory User Guide is clear, comprehensive, and contains the information users need.
- **Turnaround times** – determining whether testing and reporting times meet service requirements.
- **Technical and clinical support** – evaluating the usefulness of advice provided by laboratory staff.
- **Customer service and communication** – measuring satisfaction with how telephone and email enquiries are handled.
- **Request and referral processes** – assessing the ease of completing referral/request forms and identifying any missing information.
- **Testing services** – determining whether the current portfolio of microbiology tests meets users' needs.
- **Reporting and results** – evaluating the clarity of laboratory reports, comments, and result reporting mechanisms.
- **Future service development** – exploring demand for an expanded range of molecular tests and gathering information on potential testing requirements and volumes.
- **Overall satisfaction** – obtaining an overall assessment of MSL services and collecting additional suggestions for improvement.

The survey seeks to measure user satisfaction across all key aspects of MSL service provision, including communication, testing, reporting, advice, responsiveness, and future service development, to support ongoing quality improvement and ensure laboratory services continue to meet user needs.

To encourage 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 dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied), or specific choice answers (e.g. yes/no or always/most of the

time/rarely/never or Generally clear and Helpful/Not always clear, could be improved/Rarely clear, needs improvement).

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?



The survey was sent to 70 User email addresses from 47 different functions/customers. Overall, we received responses from 11 Users, which is a reduction from last year when 15 responses were received. We saw a decrease in the number of responses from all users of Bacteriology services (2 in 2025), Virology services (9 in 2025) and users of both MSLV and MSLB (4 in 2025). Although the survey remained open from July to September 2026, with a periodic reminder and a survey link included in email signatures, stakeholder engagement was lower than anticipated. One possible contributing factor is that the survey coincided with the UK summer holiday period, when many staff members may have been on annual leave or supporting childcare commitments. In addition, laboratory users may have experienced increased workload pressures during this period, limiting the time available to complete non-essential activities such as surveys. To maximise participation and obtain feedback from a wider range of users, future surveys will be distributed and completed earlier in the year, avoiding peak holiday periods where possible. Next year (2027), the survey will be conducted slightly earlier (e.g. May to July) to ensure optimal uptake.

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

Level of 1 to 5 (1: Dissatisfied and 5: Very satisfied)

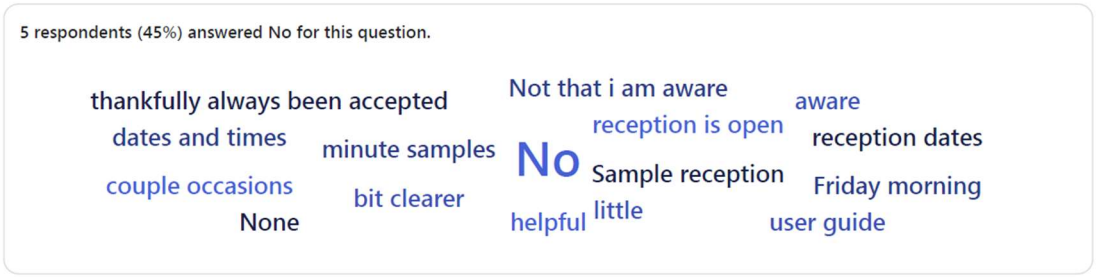


Satisfaction rating	MSL-Virology Number responses	MSL-Bacteriology Number responses	Both Number responses
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	1	0	1
4	3	0	0
5	4	0	2

Users were generally satisfied that the Laboratory User Guide provides clear and concise information for requesting MSL services. The overall satisfaction score increased slightly from 4.33 in 2025 to 4.36 in 2026. Of the 11 responses received, nine respondents rated the guide as 4 or 5, with no ratings below 3. Users of both MSL services reported higher satisfaction than in the previous year, with scores ranging from 3-5 compared to 2-4 in 2025. Overall, the results indicate that the user guide continues to effectively support users in accessing MSL services.

Q: Is there any information you think is missing from the User guide that should be added?





Responses are as follows:

None
Not that i am aware of.
N/A
Sample reception dates and times could be a little clearer. On a couple occasions we have had to send last minute samples on a Friday morning, which have thankfully always been accepted but it would be helpful to have it a bit clearer in the user guide when sample reception is open.
No
NO
No
N/A
NO
No
None.

Out of the 11 users, one virology user commented that the sample reception dates and times could be presented more clearly within the user guide. The user noted that they had not experienced any issues with sample acceptance but felt that the information could be easier to locate or interpret. MSL acknowledges this feedback; however, the laboratory's working hours and sample reception arrangements are already detailed within the current user guide. As part of the next scheduled review, MSL will consider whether these details can be made more prominent or presented in a clearer format to improve accessibility for users and further enhance the user experience.

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



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
Rarely	0	0	0
Some of the time	1	0	1
Most of the time	6	0	2
Always	1	0	0
Responses (total)	8	0	3

The drop in number of respondents this year will have impacted the results. An increase in satisfaction can be seen for Virology users (most of the time) and users of both laboratories appear similarly satisfied with turnaround times to last year.

Q: Have you requested technical and clinical advice?



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
No	4*	0	2*
Yes	4	0	1
Responses (total)	8	0	3

***Please note that, for data comparison purposes, two respondents answered "No" to this question but also provided responses to the subsequent question, which was intended to be completed only by respondents who had answered "Yes". These responses have been retained within the analysis where relevant.**

Of the 11 survey respondents, five (45%) indicated that they had requested technical and clinical advice from MSL, while six (55%) had not. Requests for advice were received from four Virology users and one user of both MSL services. No respondents using Bacteriology services alone reported requesting technical or clinical advice. Overall, the responses suggest that technical and clinical advice is accessed by a proportion of MSL users, particularly those utilising Virology services.

Q: *If yes* to previous question, how satisfied are you with the usefulness of technical and clinical advice provided?

Level of 1 to 5 (1: Dissatisfied and 5: Very satisfied)



	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	1	0	0
5	4*	0	1*

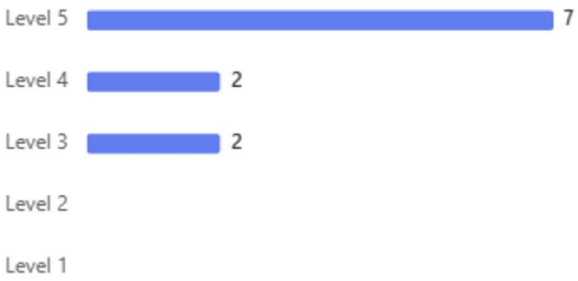
***Please note that, for data comparison purposes, two respondents answered "No" to this question but also provided responses to the subsequent question, which was intended to be completed only by respondents who had answered "Yes". These responses have been retained within the analysis where relevant.**

Users who had sought technical and clinical advice reported a high level of satisfaction with the support provided. The overall satisfaction score increased from 4.33 in 2025 to 4.71 in 2026, demonstrating an improvement in users' perception of the usefulness of the advice provided. Of the six responses received to this question, five rated the advice as 5 (Very Satisfied) and one rated it as 4, with no ratings below 4. These results indicate that users continue to find the technical and clinical advice provided by MSL to be valuable, informative, and supportive of their service requirements.

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

Level of 1 to 5 (1: Dissatisfied and 5: Very satisfied)





	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	2	0	0
5	5	0	2

Users reported a high level of satisfaction with how efficiently and effectively their email and telephone enquiries are handled by the laboratory. The overall satisfaction score increased from 4.13 in 2025 to 4.45 in 2026, indicating an improvement in users' experience of communication and customer service. Of the 11 responses received, seven respondents rated the service as 5 (Very Satisfied), two rated it as 4, and two rated it as 3, with no ratings of 1 or 2 recorded. These results demonstrate that users generally find laboratory staff responsive and effective in dealing with enquiries, with the majority expressing a high level of satisfaction with the support provided.

Q: How satisfied are you with the ease of use of the referral/request forms? Please answer for applicable department using the rating scale:

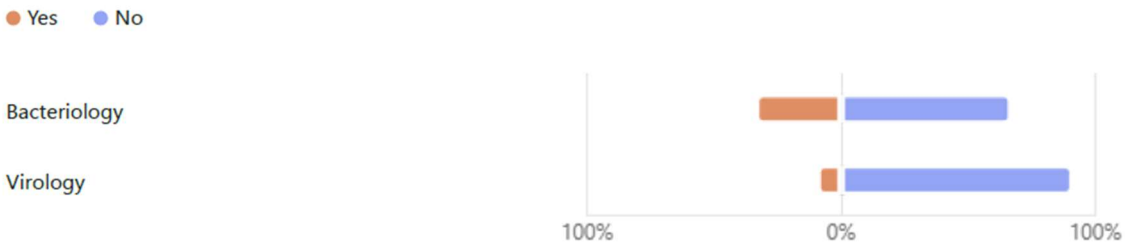
Level of 1 to 5 (1: Dissatisfied and 5: Very satisfied)



	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	2	0	1
5	6	0	2

Users reported a high level of satisfaction with the ease of use of the referral/request forms. Based on the responses received, the overall satisfaction score increased from 4.40 in 2025 to 4.73 (calculated from above's results) in 2026, demonstrating an improvement in users' experience of completing and submitting requests to the laboratory. Of the 11 responses received, eight respondents rated the forms as 5 (Very Satisfied) and three rated them as 4, with no ratings below 4. These results indicate that users generally find the referral/request forms straightforward and easy to use, with consistently positive feedback across both Virology and users of both MSL services.

Q: Is there any information you think is missing from the referral forms that should be added? Please answer for applicable department.



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
No	8	0	2
Yes	0	0	1
Responses (total)	8	0	3

The majority of users indicated that the current referral/request forms contain the information required to support their requests. Of the 11 responses received, 10 users (91%) stated that no additional information was needed, while one user (9%), representing a user of both MSL services, indicated that additional information should be included. Overall, these results suggest that users are satisfied with the content and design of the current referral/request forms, with only limited feedback identifying opportunities for further enhancement.

Q: *If yes* to previous question, please specify what information is missing from the referral form.



Responses are as follows:

N/A
extended turnaround times if problems arise

One user commented that it would be helpful for referral forms to include information on potential extended turnaround times when delays occur. However, standard turnaround times are already provided within the user guides. It is not practical to include specific delay times on referral forms, as any extension to the standard

turnaround time will vary depending on factors such as test complexity, the requirement for onward referral to external laboratories, equipment availability, and the scheduling of testing, which may change according to workload and sample numbers received. MSL welcomes this feedback and will consider how best to incorporate a statement in the next revision of the user guide to improve user awareness that turnaround times may occasionally be extended under certain circumstances.

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

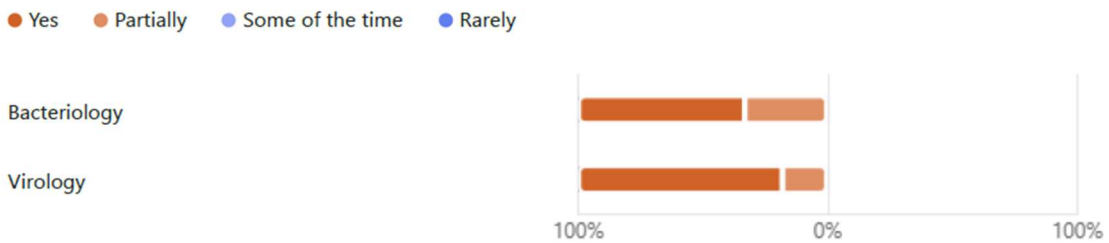


	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
No	0	0	0
Partially	0	0	0
Yes	8	0	3
Responses (total)	8	0	3

All 11 users (100%) indicated that the current portfolio of tests provided by MSL meets the needs of their service, with no respondents selecting either "Partially" or "No". This represents an improvement compared with the 2025 survey, where 93% (14/15) of respondents answered "Yes" and 7% (1/15) answered "No".

The results demonstrate a high level of confidence in the range of tests offered by MSL and suggest that the current test portfolio continues to meet user requirements. The increase from 93% to 100% satisfaction may reflect ongoing developments and improvements within the service, ensuring that users have access to the testing required to support their clinical and operational needs.

Q: Are the results in the laboratory report presented in a clear manner? Please answer for the applicable department.



Satisfaction rating	MSL-Virology Number responses	MSL-Bacteriology Number responses	Both Number responses
Rarely	0	0	0
Some of the time	0	0	0
Partially	1	0	1
Yes	7**	0	2
Responses (total)	8	0	3

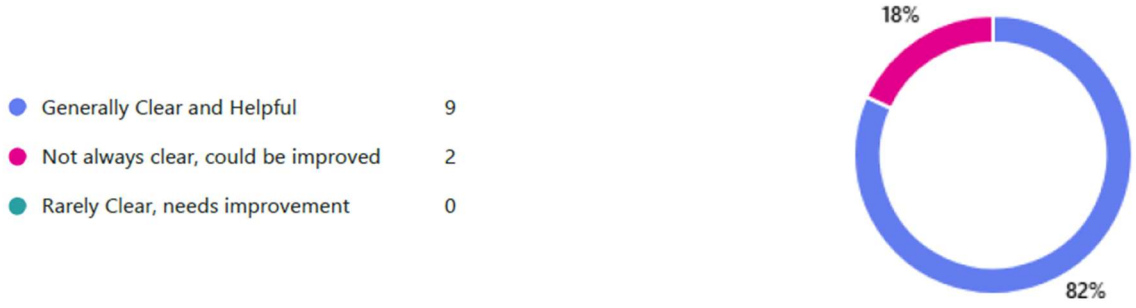
Overall, users indicated that laboratory reports are presented in a clear manner. Of the 11 responses received in 2026, 9 respondents (82%) answered "Yes", while 2 respondents (18%) selected "Partially". No users selected the equivalent of "Some of the time" or "Rarely".

*****Excluding one user's response, 8 of 10 users (80%) answered "Yes"** and 2 of 10 users (20%) answered "Partially". While this results in a small change to the percentages reported, the overall conclusion remains unchanged, with all applicable users indicating that laboratory reports are presented clearly and no users reporting that reports are unclear.*

When compared with the 2025 survey, satisfaction has improved. In 2025, 10 of 15 respondents (67%) answered "Yes", 3 (20%) answered "Most of the time", and 2 (13%) answered "No". For comparison purposes, "Partially" in the 2026 survey is considered equivalent to "Most of the time" from the 2025 survey, as both responses indicate that reports are generally clear but may benefit from some improvement.

Notably, no users in 2026 indicated that reports were unclear, compared with two users in 2025 who answered "No". These results suggest that users continue to be satisfied with the presentation of laboratory reports, with an overall improvement in perceptions of report clarity since the previous survey.

Q: Regarding the utility and clarity of the report comments, do you find them:



Satisfaction rating	MSL-Virology Number responses	MSL-Bacteriology Number responses	Both Number responses
Rarely clear	0	0	0
Not always clear	1	0	1
Generally clear	7**	0	2
Responses (total)	8	0	3

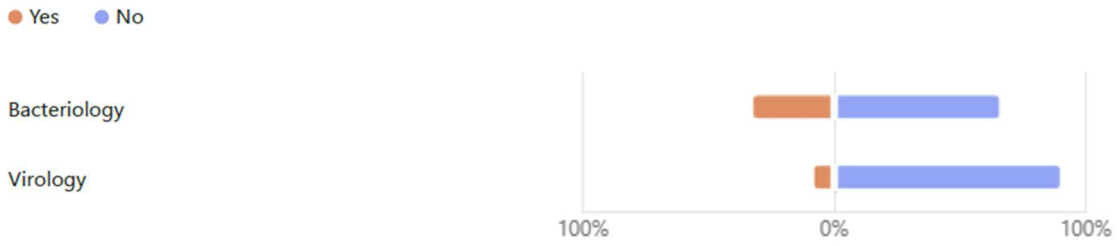
Overall, feedback regarding the utility and clarity of laboratory report comments remained highly positive in 2026. Of the 11 users, 9 (82%) reported that the comments were generally clear and helpful, while 2 (18%) indicated that they were not always clear and could be improved. No users selected "Rarely clear, needs improvement".

*****Excluding one user's response, 8 of 10 users (80%)** reported that report comments were generally clear and helpful, while 2 of 10 users (20%) indicated that they were not always clear. Despite this minor change in the percentages, the overall conclusion remains unchanged, with the majority of users finding report comments clear and useful.*

These results are comparable to those from the 2025 survey, in which 13 of 15 users (87%) considered report comments to be generally clear and helpful, while 2 (13%) reported that they were not always clear. No users in either survey indicated that report comments were rarely clear.

Following feedback received in previous surveys, MSL have continued to review the content and presentation of report comments to ensure they remain clear, informative, and relevant to users. The 2026 results indicate that report comments continue to meet the needs of the majority of users, although MSL will continue to consider opportunities to further improve clarity and consistency where possible.

Q: Is there any information you think is missing from the reports that should be added? Please answer for applicable department.



	MSL-Virology	MSL-Bacteriology	Both
Satisfaction rating	Number responses	Number responses	Number responses
No	8**	0	2
Yes	0	0	1
Responses (total)	8	0	3

The majority of users were satisfied with the information provided in laboratory reports. Of the 11 users who responded, 10 (91%) indicated that no additional information was required, while 1 user (9%) suggested that further information could be added. Overall, these results suggest that the current report format meets the needs of most users, although the feedback received will be reviewed to identify any potential opportunities for improvement.

******Excluding one user's response of 8, 100% (10/10) of users*** *indicated that no additional information was required within laboratory reports, suggesting that the current report format meets the needs of all applicable users.*

Q: *If yes* to previous question, Please specify what information is missing from the report.



Responses are as follows:

N/A
Hospital or NHS numbers when reporting results via email as MSL numbers are not recognised by our service and sometimes reports sent get lot or misplaced on emails

The majority of users were satisfied with the information provided in laboratory reports. Of the 11 users who responded, 10 (91%) indicated that no additional information was required, while 1 user of both services (9%) suggested that further information could be added.

The user commented that inclusion of a hospital or NHS number on reports issued by email would assist their service in identifying and filing reports, as MSL reference numbers are not routinely recognised within their local systems. MSL Bacteriology does not have access to Hospital or NHS numbers and therefore cannot include these identifiers on reports. Although MSL Virology may have access to this information for some samples, additional identifiers are not available or recorded for all referrals, and the current reporting process is largely manual. Introducing additional identifiers into email headers would add further administrative steps, which could increase processing time and the potential for transcription errors. The MSL Lab number is used for all customers as the identifier. With planned future development and implementation of a new LIMS, we will explore this as a report identification option.

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

Level of 1 to 5 (1: Dissatisfied and 5: Very satisfied)



	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	3	0	0
5	4	0	2

Users reported a high level of satisfaction with the mechanisms used by MSL to report results. The overall satisfaction score increased from 4.07 in 2025 to 4.36 in 2026, indicating an improvement in users' experience of receiving laboratory results.

In 2026, 5 of 11 users (45%) rated the reporting mechanisms as 5 (Very Satisfied), 4 users (36%) rated them as 4, and 2 users (18%) rated them as 3, with no ratings of 1 or 2. By comparison, in 2025, 3 of 15 users (20%) rated the service as 5, 10 users (67%) rated it as 4, and 2 users (13%) rated it as 3.

******Excluding this response, the average satisfaction score for 2026 increases slightly to 4.40****, with 50% (5/10) of users rating the reporting mechanisms as 5, 40% (4/10) rating them as 4, and 10% (1/10) rating them as 3.*

The increase in the overall satisfaction score and the higher proportion of users awarding the maximum rating suggest that users continue to view the current reporting mechanisms positively and that satisfaction with result reporting has improved since the previous survey.

Whilst most users are satisfied with the current reporting mechanisms, MSL recognises that both the reporting processes and report formats could be improved. For several years, MSL has been advocating for a new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to better meet user requirements, enhance reporting functionality, and improve operational efficiency). MSL are expected to be included within a wider Pathology LIMS programme, which should provide further opportunities to modernise reporting and improve the user experience.

Q: We may have the ability to provide a wider range of molecular tests in the future. Would you be interested in this, **if yes** please state which markers e.g. EBV PCR, B9 PCR



Responses are as follows:

Hepatitis A and Parvovirus B19
Hospitals often request extra testing on samples from stem cell donors from abroad, where some testing cannot be performed by the registry. This includes tropical viruses which I think you send off for testing, but VZV is also requested sometimes.
N/a
NA
Not at the moment

Users were asked whether they would be interested in a wider range of molecular tests being provided by MSL in the future and, if so, to specify the markers or assays of interest. The responses received indicate that there is interest among some users in expanding the molecular testing portfolio, with several suggestions provided for additional markers and assays.

The feedback received will be reviewed by MSL as part of future service development planning to help identify areas where there may be user demand for additional molecular testing. Consideration will be given to the clinical value, anticipated testing volumes, resource requirements, and technical feasibility of introducing any new assays. Overall, the responses provide useful insight into potential future testing needs and will help inform strategic decisions regarding the expansion of MSL services.

Q: *If yes* to previous question, what are your anticipated monthly/annual sample numbers? And are there any other tests you would be interested in?





Responses are as follows:

Unknown
VZV - once every couple of months
N/a
NA

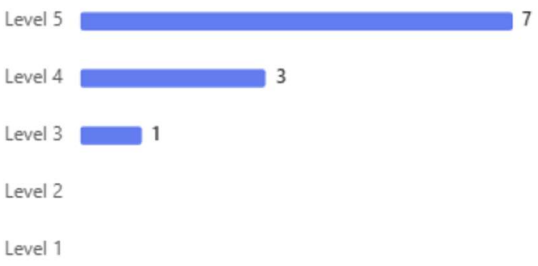
Users who expressed an interest in a broader molecular testing portfolio were asked to provide anticipated sample numbers and details of any additional tests they would like MSL to offer.

Whilst the low response rate limits the conclusions that can be drawn, the feedback received will be reviewed as part of MSL's future service development planning. Any proposed new assays will be assessed based on user demand, clinical need, anticipated testing volumes, technical feasibility, resource requirements, and alignment with the strategic direction of the service.

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

Level of 1 to 5 (1: Dissatisfied and 5: Very satisfied)





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

Overall satisfaction with MSL services remained high in 2026, with an average satisfaction score of 4.55, compared with 4.47 in 2025. Of the 11 users who responded, 7 (64%) rated the service as 5 (Very Satisfied), 3 (27%) rated it as 4, and 1 (9%) rated it as 3, with no ratings of 1 or 2.

*** Excluding this user's score and considering only users who rated the service 4 or 5, **the average satisfaction score for 2026 increases to 4.70 (10 users),** demonstrating a very high level of satisfaction amongst the remaining respondents. MSL will review the feedback regarding the return of receipted FRM5865 forms to determine whether any improvements to the current process are feasible.*

Overall, the results demonstrate that users continue to be highly satisfied with the services provided by MSL.

**** One Virology user subsequently advised that Questions 12-18 were not applicable to their team and requested that their responses be disregarded. Where these responses have been included in the analysis, they may have a minor impact on the reported averages and percentages for the relevant questions. This has been reflected in the summaries.**

4. User Survey Comments and MSL responses

All comments received as part of this survey are summarised in table 1. This report will be circulated to all our Users so they can see the survey findings and MSL responses to comments.

All Comment received	MSL response
MSL Virology User: We have struggled with the interpretation of Malaria Ab comments so would be grateful of greater clarity of these comments, when multiple testing methods have been performed.	Thank you for your feedback. MSL appreciate you highlighting this issue and understand the importance of clear and easy-to-interpret report comments, particularly where multiple testing methods have been performed. MSL would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you to better understand the specific difficulties encountered when interpreting Malaria Ab results and comments. This feedback will help us assess whether additional clarification or improvements to the report comments would be beneficial. If we have misunderstood any aspect of your comment, please do not hesitate to contact the laboratory and we would be happy to arrange a discussion.
MSL Virology User (possibility of providing a wider range of molecular tests in future, which ones would be of interest): Hepatitis A and Parvovirus B19	Thank you for your suggestion. MSL will continue to review user requirements and service developments to help inform future service planning, and we appreciate your input in identifying areas of potential demand.
MSL Virology User (possibility of providing a wider range of molecular tests in future, which ones would be of interest): Hospitals often request extra testing on samples from stem cell donors from abroad, where some testing cannot be performed by the registry. This includes tropical viruses which I think you send off for testing, but VZV is also requested sometimes.	Thank you for your suggestion. MSL appreciate this suggestion and recognise that tests such as tropical virus screening and VZV may occasionally be requested by transplant centres. At present, it is not possible for MSL Virology to provide these tests in-house for several operational and service-related reasons. Where such testing is required, samples are referred to an external laboratory to ensure the necessary testing can be performed.
MSL Virology (information to be added to User guide): Sample reception dates and times could be a little clearer. On a couple occasions we have had to send last minute samples on a Friday morning, which have thankfully always been accepted but it would be helpful to have it a bit clearer in the user guide when sample reception is open.	Thank you for your feedback. MSL are pleased that your urgent samples were able to be accepted when required and appreciate your suggestion regarding the clarity of sample reception times. The MSL Virology User Guide, INF1060, details laboratory working hours in Section 3.3 and provides guidance on sample dispatch in Section 5.4, including the recommendation that samples should not be sent to arrive on Friday afternoons. MSL will consider whether this information can be made more prominent in future updates. If we have misunderstood any aspect of your comment, please feel free to contact the laboratory and we would be happy to discuss this further.

MSL Virology (other comments): Currently my team and I receive confirmation that our blood samples have been received at about 09:00, but the receipted copy of the FRM5865 is often not received until 2 - 4pm. It would aid our reconciliation process greatly if the FRM5865 could be stamped and emailed at the time when the current email confirming receipt is sent. This would allow us to identify the specific samples received and update the relevant files. Questions 12 - 18 above are not relevant to my team, so please disregard these answers.	Thank you for your feedback and for highlighting how the timing of the receipted FRM5865 can impact your reconciliation process. MSL appreciate that receiving the stamped form earlier would make it easier to identify specific samples received and update records in a timely manner. While receipt confirmation emails are typically issued as soon as samples are logged, reception duties and fluctuating workload mean it is not always possible for staff to stamp and email the corresponding FRM5865 at the same time. However, MSL continually reviews its workflows and processes, and we will take your suggestion into account as part of future service improvement discussions.
MSL Both (Information missing from the referral form): extended turnaround times if problems arise	Thank you for your suggestion. MSL recognise the importance of keeping users informed when delays may occur. Standard turnaround times are already provided within the relevant MSL user guides. However, it is not practical to include specific delay times on referral forms, as any extension to the standard turnaround time can vary depending on a range of factors, including test complexity, the need for onward referral to external laboratories, equipment availability, and the scheduling of testing, which may change according to workload and sample numbers received. MSL welcomes this feedback and will consider how best to incorporate a statement in the next revision of the user guide to improve user awareness that turnaround times may occasionally be extended under certain circumstances.
MSL Both (Information missing from the report): Hospital or NHS numbers when reporting results via email as MSL numbers are not recognised by our service and sometimes reports sent get lot or misplaced on emails	Thank you for your feedback. MSL appreciate that the inclusion of Hospital or NHS numbers on emailed reports may assist some users with identifying and filing reports within their local systems, particularly where MSL reference numbers are not routinely recognised. MSL Bacteriology does not have access to Hospital or NHS numbers and therefore cannot include these identifiers on reports. Although MSL Virology may have access to this information for some samples, additional identifiers are not available or recorded for all referrals, and the current reporting process is largely manual. Introducing additional identifiers into email headers would add further administrative steps, which could increase processing time and the potential for transcription errors. While we are unable to commit to implementing this change at present, we welcome this feedback and will keep it under consideration as part of future service and reporting reviews. Please also note, although some years away, with the planned future development and implementation of a Pathology LIMS, we will explore if this request is possible.

MSL actions:

MSL action	*Action taken*	*Target date*
Review user feedback and requests arising from the survey to assess feasibility, potential impact, and any service improvements.	To be reviewed by the MSL Management Team with relevant laboratory sections and Senior staff.	March 2027

5. Analysis:

Despite a lower response rate in 2026 (11 responses compared with 15 in 2025), the survey results indicate that users continue to be highly satisfied with the services provided by MSL. Satisfaction scores either remained stable or improved across most areas assessed, suggesting that the service continues to meet user expectations and requirements.

Particularly positive results were seen for the usefulness of technical and clinical advice (4.71 vs 4.33 in 2025), the handling of email and telephone enquiries (4.45 vs 4.13), the ease of use of referral/request forms (4.73 vs 4.40), and mechanisms for reporting results (4.36 vs 4.07). Overall satisfaction with MSL services also increased slightly from 4.47 in 2025 to 4.55 in 2026.

The Laboratory User Guide continues to be viewed positively by users, with satisfaction increasing marginally from 4.33 to 4.36. Only one user suggested that sample reception information could be presented more clearly. Similarly, referral/request forms and laboratory reports were generally considered clear and fit for purpose, with most users indicating that no additional information was required.

All users (100%) confirmed that the current portfolio of tests meets the needs of their service, representing an improvement from 2025 when one user indicated that the portfolio did not fully meet their requirements. This suggests that MSL's current testing repertoire continues to align well with user needs.

Turnaround times were also viewed positively, with most users indicating that turnaround times meet their requirements most of the time or always. Feedback requesting additional information regarding potential delays has been noted; however, due to the variability associated with test complexity, external referrals, workload and testing schedules, it is not practical to define specific delay periods. MSL will consider whether further explanatory information can be included within future revisions of the User Guide.

Feedback relating to laboratory reports was similarly encouraging. Users reported that reports and associated comments were generally clear and helpful, with no users indicating that reports were unclear. One user suggested that the inclusion of Hospital or NHS numbers on emailed reports may improve traceability within their local systems. MSL will explore whether this may be feasible for Virology reports where such information is available.

Although current reporting mechanisms received positive feedback, MSL recognises that opportunities remain for improvement. Work is ongoing to modernise reporting processes through planned LIMS developments, which are expected to provide benefits in the short term and support longer-term integration into a wider Pathology LIMS programme.

Interest was also expressed in the potential expansion of MSL's molecular testing portfolio. Whilst relatively few responses were received to these questions, the information provided will be considered as part of future service development planning and assessment of user demand for new assays.

A limitation of this year's survey is the reduced number of responses received. The survey was conducted between July and September, coinciding with the summer holiday period, which may have affected participation. To improve engagement and obtain feedback from a wider user base, future surveys will be undertaken earlier in the year.

Overall, the results demonstrate that users continue to view MSL services positively, with high levels of satisfaction reported across communication, technical support, testing services, reporting, and overall service delivery. The survey has also identified several opportunities for further improvement, which will be reviewed by MSL as part of its ongoing quality improvement programme.

All actions to be completed before our next User survey in 2027.

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

Appendix: Copy of MSL User Satisfaction Survey 2026

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?
4. The turnaround time meets the needs of our service?
5. Have you requested technical and clinical advice?
6. If Yes to Question 5, How satisfied are you with the usefulness of technical and clinical advice provided?
7. How satisfied are you that your email/telephone enquiries are dealt with efficiently and effectively by the laboratory?
8. How satisfied are you with the ease of use of the referral/request forms? Please answer for applicable department using the rating scale: 1: Dissatisfied to 5: Very satisfied
9. Is there any information you think is missing from the referral forms that should be added? Please answer for applicable department
10. If Yes to Question 9, Please specify what information is missing from the referral form.
11. Does the portfolio of tests provided meet the needs of your Service?
12. Are the results in the laboratory report presented in a clear manner? Please answer for the applicable department.
13. 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
14. Is there any information you think is missing from the reports that should be added? Please answer for applicable department.
15. If yes to Question 14, Please specify what information is missing from the report.
16. How satisfied are you with mechanisms for reporting results?
17. We may have the ability to provide a wider range of molecular tests in the future. Would you be interested in this, **if yes** please state which markers e.g. EBV PCR, B9 PCR
18. ***If yes*** to previous question, what are your anticipated monthly/annual sample numbers? And are there any other tests you would be interested in?
19. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Laboratory‘s services?
20. Are there any other comments you have for MSL?