

ESNEFT Microbiology Reduction in Scope of

Testing in Response to COVID Pressures

Dear Colleagues, Clinicians and Healthcare Professionals,

As you are aware, due to the rapidly increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases, the hospitals have seen unprecedented demands on its services and this has significantly impacted on the working of the Microbiology Laboratories, as they are required to provide a rapid diagnostic service for hospital admissions and Ipswich is also providing a high throughput COVID testing service. This service is essential to allow timely patient flows into and around the hospitals and also ensure patients are treated appropriately. In order for us to be able to provide this essential COVID service, with regret we are going to evoke our Business Continuity Plan and as part of this we will have to reduce some of the routine samples we accept into the departments.

In discussion with the ESNEFT Microbiology Consultants and following the recommendations from the RCPATH and Professional Bodies (IBMS, ACP and ACB) from **8 February 2021** ESNEFT Microbiology Laboratories will not be able to accept the following sample types which will be rejected. This change in practice will be in place for another two week period and it will reviewed by the management team after this time.

Faeces Samples for:

- Routine culture, except in children with bloody diarrhoea, query haemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), in cases of a strongly suspected outbreak or foreign travel with risk of enteric fever.
- Testing for *Cl. difficile* will continue as normal at both sites.

Urine Samples for:

- GP's with uncomplicated UTI's and no evidence of treatment failures

HVS/LVS/Cx Samples for:

- Uncomplicated discharge
- Superficial infections, other than children < 10, who are not post-operative

Chlamydia for:

- All samples other than from inpatients, pregnant patients, or eye swabs

Wounds for:

- Superficial wound samples including Ulcers from GP and community patients excepting those from the Diabetic Foot Clinic
- Ear Swabs with Otitis Externa except those from ENT patients

Blood Samples for;

- Occupational health screens for staff not working in front line NHS work

Respiratory for:

- Nose swabs,
- Neonatal baby screens **will** be tested.

Mycology Samples

- No dermatophyte samples will be processed

Please be assured we are doing everything we can to resume normal service as soon as possible and apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

We would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation and patience.

Yours faithfully

Dr Luke Bedford

Consultant Microbiologist and Infection Control