

RMH SIHMDS

27th March 2020

Dear Colleagues

Re: Impact of Covid-19 on the Clinical Genomics service

As the situation is progressing quickly we felt it was important that we update you on how the Clinical Genomics service is dealing with the challenging circumstances arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and to reassure you that wherever possible we will endeavour to maintain the current high quality service.

The laboratories comprising the SIHMDS service have developed comprehensive strategies to deal with the current and potential reduced availability of staff. These consist of a phased approach based on the level of staff available and as it stands at the moment we are at the first stage of the plan.

- Staffing: we are implementing splitting of teams and home working to ensure that staff stay well and reduce their exposure risk; staff are also working more flexibly to accommodate child care requirements; we are cross training staff wherever possible to ensure that all staffing skills are covered
- Sample prioritisation: this is already in operation within the service and we will continue to prioritise clinically urgent samples first; non urgent samples will be processed as required and analysed and reported as and when capacity allows.

From a SIHMDS perspective the following clinical details are treated as urgent:

- ?Acute Leukaemia / ?ALL / ?AML/?APL
- MDS / CMML ?Transformation/blast crisis CML
- ALL/AML MRD (day 29 MRD and week 14 MRD for poor responders at day 29) plus ?Relapse
- Newly identified PNH clone > 5%
- Blasts on film
- High grade Lymphoma (e.g. DLBCL and BL)/transformation of CLL or follicular lymphoma
- Children <18 years old at first referral or ?progression

NHSE have provided specific guidance for **clinical genomics** testing and that information is embedded below.



NHSE advice on
prioritisation of genor

We feel that the measures currently in place in conjunction with reduced referral activity are sufficient to maintain current urgent turnaround times and will only minimally impact on non urgent TATs

Please note that due to the increased risk associated with certain sample types we are no longer able to accept the following samples: bronchial lavage, ebus or pleural fluid samples.

Communication is critical here and we would appreciate it if you use the generic emails provided to communicate any change in sample urgency using the phones only where needed.

We will let you know if we need to move to any enhanced contingency that would impact on TATs but feel confident that we will be able to provide the required TATs for clinically urgent samples.

Cytogenetics laboratory: cytogenetics@icr.ac.uk

Molecular diagnostics: rmh-tr.moleculardiagnosics@nhs.net

Immunophenotyping: immunophenotyping@icr.ac.uk

Histopathology:

HHMDS@rmh.nhs.uk – for laboratory

MedSec.Haematopathology@rmh.nhs.uk – for medical PA

rmh-tr.HistopathologyHMDS@nhs.net – NHS.net account for Haempath medical PA

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us using the contact details below

Yours Faithfully

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