

Guidelines for the prioritisation of laboratory genomics services during the COVID-19 pandemic:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have issued an update on genomic testing prioritisation which is effective from 1st August 2020.

Table 1: Updated genomic testing prioritisation

Key to RAG rating			
Green	Continue		
Amber	Partial stop		
Red	Only continue if there is laboratory resource available over and above that required to deliver genomic testing		
COVID testing services	RAG rating	Rationale for RAG	Further details
COVID testing	Red	Alternative capacity being put in place	GLH to obtain permission from NHS England and NHS Improvement to divert capacity to COVID testing
Cancer somatic genomic services	RAG rating	Rationale for RAG	Further details
All clinically appropriate testing to inform diagnosis	Green	Urgent cancer service	
All clinically appropriate testing to inform therapy choice and patient management	Green	Urgent cancer service	
Urgent minimum residual disease monitoring e.g. acute leukaemias	Green	Urgent cancer service	
Other minimum residual disease monitoring e.g. non urgent chronic myeloid leukaemia	Green	Cancer service	
Chimerism testing for stem cell transplant monitoring	Green	Cancer service	
Testing for myeloproliferative neoplasms	Green	Cancer service	
Rare disease genomic services	RAG rating	Rationale for RAG	Further details
All prenatal diagnosis	Green	Urgent diagnostic service	
Urgent carrier testing relating to pregnancy	Green	Urgent diagnostic service	
Testing to inform urgent management, transplantation or therapy e.g. neonatal diabetes and congenital hyperinsulinism testing, BRCA testing to inform chemotherapy options etc.	Green	Urgent diagnostic service	
Rapid exome sequencing for NICU/PICU	Green	Urgent diagnostic service	
Genomic testing to support New Born Screening Programme e.g. cystic fibrosis, MCADD	Green	Urgent diagnostic service	
All other rare disease testing	Green	Diagnostic service	Including processing any locally stored samples and accept samples from all GLHs for testing.

Therefore with immediate effect we will process and test all samples received.

Clinicians must continue to notify the laboratory when sending a sample from a known or suspected COVID-19 patient; such samples should be clearly labelled with a 'Danger of Infection' or 'High Infection Risk' sticker. Failure to do so will put the laboratory staff at increased risk.

Buccal scrapes (mouthbrushes) or lung tissue samples should not be sent to the laboratory, while saliva samples should only be sent in exceptional circumstances (i.e. where there is an urgent clinical need and an alternative sample is not possible); in these circumstances, please contact the laboratory prior to sending the sample: shc-tr.WRGLdutyscientist@nhs.net

PLEASE NOTE that we will NOT accept buccal, saliva or lung samples from a known or suspected COVID-19 patient under any circumstances.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our service users for their patience and continued support during this challenging time.