

FOI 3270

10th September 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

- 1. Does your trust have dedicated virology laboratories, or are diagnostic tests for viral infections conducted in microbiology laboratories?**

Response:

The Regional Virology Laboratory in Belfast provides the routine virology diagnostic testing for Northern Ireland. Some rapid / Point of Care testing is performed at the hospital sites for COVID, Flu, RSV, and norovirus.

- 2. Do you provide clinical advice to more than 1 trust? If so, does that include onsite availability and how many trusts, hospitals, health boards, and organisations?**

Response:

Clinical Advice is provided by the Medical Microbiologists for the Southern Health & Social Care Trust region only.

- 3. Is your trust responsible and/or do they cover any other laboratory, if so, how many laboratories?**

Response:

Clinical Advice is provided by the Medical Microbiologists for the SHSCT region only, which has a single Microbiology laboratory.

- 4. What type of lab setup does your organisation currently use?**

Response:

The Microbiology laboratory is set up to provide clinical microbiology using traditional culture methods, supported by molecular screening.

- 5. Approximately how many tests have you received yearly for swabs, blood, urine & stools in the last 5 years for MM, MVIR & ID?**

Response:

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Urines	109886	99271	120186	131704	140024
Faeces	11460	10797	14489	18081	19920
Blood Culture swabs	13293	9377	11644	13685	15922
	46625	32718	41310	48983	52112

6. As a medical microbiologist / medical virologist accredited in infectious diseases, do you provide inpatient care?

Response:

We provide a liaison service.

7. How many of your working hours are spent between the listed work areas, per week?

Response:

There would be substantial variation and this would be difficult to quantify.

8. How many microbiologists also do virology workload.

Response:

No specialist virology service

Advice is provided on Infection Prevention and Control aspects of viral infections

9. Does the service cover the listed out-of-hours (inpatient or other)?

Response:

The consultant microbiologist on call provides clinical microbiology advice and infection control advice OOH for both inpatients and general practice.

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