

## Blood Cultures

Reference Number: RDF1965-23

Date of Response: 25/10/23

Further to your Freedom of Information Act request, please find the Trust's response(s) below:

Please be aware that the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Royal Devon) has existed since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 following the integration of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust (known as Northern Services) and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (known as Eastern Services).

*This is a FOI request relating to the microbiology laboratory service and blood cultures.*

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST: BLOOD CULTURES

1. *Please table the hospitals or other acute sites currently submitting blood cultures and for each site-*
  - a. *Are blood cultures incubated and/or processed on site or sent to a microbiology laboratory off site?*
  - b. *If incubated or processed off site, what is the distance in miles between the site and the offsite laboratory?*
  - c. *How many blood culture sets were submitted from each site in 2022/23?*
  - d. *Number of bed days for all patients per site*

Answer: Please see table below.

<i>Name of acute site</i>	<i>Blood incubated on-site? Y/N</i>	<i>Blood Processed on site? Y/N</i>	<i>Distance to off-site lab in miles</i>	<i>No. cultures submitted 2022/2023 (Adults and paediatrics)</i>	<i>Number of bed days 2022/23</i>
Royal Devon University Hospital - Eastern Services	Yes	Yes	Not applicable	18,397 (adult sets: 36,794 bottles)  Paeds: 1,446 bottles	The Trust can confirm that it holds information that you have requested. This information is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act because it is reasonably accessible to you. The information you requested can be accessed via the following link (published quarterly): <a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/bed-data-day-only/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/bed-data-day-only/</a>
Royal Devon University Hospital - Northern Services	Yes	Yes	n/a	7,987 (adult sets: 15,974 bottles)  Paeds: 227 bottles	Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act exempts disclosure of information that is reasonably accessible by other means. The terms of this exemption mean that the Trust does not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.

2. *Does the Trust follow the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (SMI S12) in relation to Blood Cultures?*

Answer: Yes.

3. *Do you undertake formal compliance audits of the recommended pre-analytical standard for blood cultures of a four-hour TAT from collection to incubation? YES/NO*

Answer: YES, at the request of NHSi.

4. *What percentage of blood culture sets achieved this standard in the year 2022/23 at each site.*

*If full compliance with the pre-analytical standard cannot be met, are clinicians made aware of the risk via a statement in the report on specimens which encountered delay?*

Name of site	% achieving 4-hr TAT	Delayed incubation reported Y/N
Royal Devon University Hospital – Eastern Services	75.3%	No
Royal Devon University Hospital – Northern Services	68%	No

5. *What is the population served by the Trust?*

Answer: Exeter, East and Mid Devon (catchment population 401,841), North Devon (catchment population 140,563). Total: 542,404.

6. *What was the total expenditure on laboratory services (directorate of pathology) as a percentage of total Trust expenditure in the year 2022/23*

Answer: 2%.

7. *Please append a copy of your blood culture protocol or policy or other document which informs clinical staff when they should take a blood culture.*

Answer: Blood culture taking is part of multiple clinical guidelines, e.g. the infectious endocarditis guideline requests 3 blood cultures, sepsis-6 requests a set of blood cultures. Because blood culture taking is based on syndromic suspicion there is no specific blood culture guideline, it is just one of many possible tests taken during a patient workup.