

Immunology & Immunogenetics

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Dear Royal United Hospitals (RUH, Bath) autoantibody testing service users,

Notification of forthcoming change in the autoantibody immunoblot methods & site of testing

What is changing? As part of the West of England Pathology Network (WoEPN) restructuring of regional immunology services, the Clinical Immunology laboratories across Bristol and Bath are being consolidated to the Department of Immunology & Immunogenetics at North Bristol Trust.

As part of this process, the Bath specialist autoantibody testing service, which includes myositis and systemic sclerosis antibody testing, will also be relocated.

Will I notice any differences to my results? The principle of testing will remain the same, all sera will continue to be tested by both indirect immunofluorescence (**Euroimmun substrate HEp-2 cell line**) and multiparameter autoantibody line blots (**Euroimmun EUROLINE blots**, using the **EUROBlotOne instrument**). Testing will continue to be performed in an accredited immunology laboratory service (ISO15189:2022) by highly trained and skilled HCPC registered scientists with many years of experience performing these assays.

We are expanding the repertoire of antibody tests we provide; after the transfer of the service the following antibodies will be available for each panel:

- **Myositis antibody panel:** anti-Mi-2 alpha, Mi-2 beta, TIF1g, MDA5, NXP2, SAE1, Ku, PM-Scl100, PM-Scl75, Jo-1, SRP, PL-7, PL-12, EJ, OJ, Ro-52, cN-1A, Ha, Ks & Zo.
- **Systemic sclerosis antibody panel:** anti-Scl-70, CENP-A, CENP-B, RNA polymerase III (RP11 & RP155), U3-RNP (Fibrillarin), NOR90, Th/To, PM-Scl100, PM-Scl75, Ku, NVL & Ro-52
- **Anti-nuclear antibody panel:** anti-nRNP/Sm, Sm (Smith), U1-RNP (RNP70, RNPA, RNPC), Ro-60 (SS-A), Ro-52, La (SS-B), Scl-70, PM-Scl, Jo-1, CENP-B, PCNA, dsDNA, nucleosomes, histones, ribosomal P-proteins & AMA-M2.



Ingrid Barker, Joint Chair.
Maria Kane, Joint Chief Executive.

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Interpretation and reporting of the antibody panels will follow the same principles currently applied in Bath.

Do we need to make any changes to our processes? We will be contacting each referring laboratory individually to discuss their circumstances. IT adjustments may be required for referring samples and receiving results via Labgnostic (previously NPEX). From the date of service transfer, samples will need to be directly referred to Bristol.

Does the laboratory in Bristol have the same close links with the specialist immunoprecipitation (IP) Autoantibody Diagnostics and Discovery service at the University of Bath (formerly BIRD Diagnostics)?

Yes. The Immunology & Immunogenetics laboratory in Bristol maintains ongoing research and accreditation collaborations with the University team (Dr Sarah Tansley and Professor Neil McHugh) and meets regularly. Where IP antibody testing may be useful, we will indicate this in our reports.

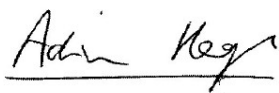
Further details concerning the University of Bath IP service are available here: <https://www.bathautoantibodies.com/>

Will the costs of the tests change? Not significantly: there will be a minor uplift in the antibody panel prices in line with inflation. The 2026-27 prices for the test panels will be included in future communications.

When is the change occurring? The exact date for the transfer of work from Bath to Bristol has yet to be decided. It is expected the transfer of services will start from mid-May 2026. We will provide you with more specific timescales in future communications.

Please feel free to contact us if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Kind regards



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