General Information – Microbiology

The Microbiology Department provides a comprehensive service for the diagnosis, management and control of microbial disease. The department also handles cases involving Public Health issues such as salmonella infections and meningitis and is involved in the monitoring and prevention of hospital acquired infections.

The service includes:

- Culture, identification and antimicrobial susceptibility testing of bacterial pathogens
- Microscopy, culture and identification of fungal pathogens
- Microscopy for faecal parasites
- Serological techniques for the detection of viral antigens and antibodies for diagnosis of infections and evidence of immunity.
- Microscopy, detection and isolation of Mycobacteria
- State-of-the-art molecular platforms for the amplification and detections of Chlamydia, Neisseria gonorrhoea and SARS-CoV-2.
- Referral of samples and isolates to reference centres for specialist testing for rare and exotic infections
- Technical and clinical advice is available and the department has close links with the hospital infection control teams

Microbiology is based at an off-site facility in Basildon. All Microbiology samples are processed at this hub location, with the exception of blood cultures where initial incubation is at the hospital sites. Positive bottles are sent to the hub laboratory for isolation and identification of bacteria, and antimicrobial susceptibility testing.
The laboratory has undertaken assessment to ISO 15189 and our accredited test repertoire can be viewed on the UKAS website
The hub opening hours are 08:00 to 20:00 weekdays and 09:00 to 17:30 at weekends. An urgent on-call service is operated outside of these hours.
When sending urgent samples it is imperative that the laboratory is notified. Outside of core hours the Duty Biomedical Scientist must be contacted via either hospital switchboard
Clinical advice is available at each hospital site via contacts
Laboratory contacts are available via contacts
Please click here for Sample Acceptance criteria