

Synnovis Histology: User Handbook Princess Royal University Hospital

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1.0	New User Handbooks created for the Histopathology Service – covering the Hub, and the Essential Services Laboratories (ESLs) at GSTT, KCH, PRUH and RBHH. This version is for users of the Princess Royal University Hospital.	February 2026

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1	Purpose	3
1.2	ABOUT US.....	3
2.	CONTACT US	6
2.1	Contact address	6
2.2	Contact and enquiries	6
2.3	Hours of opening.....	6
2.4	Clinical staff contact details	7
2.5	Service Leads	7
2.6	Complaints	7
2.7	Protection of patient information.....	7
3.	HISTOPATHOLOGY INFORMATION.....	8
3.1	Fixatives and specimen containers.....	8
3.2	Specimens that should be pre-booked (24 hours' notice).....	10
3.3	Frozen sections.....	10
3.4	Requests and labelling	10
3.5	Urgent Specimens and Cancer pathway requests.....	12
3.6	Referral Cases	12
3.7	Histology Turnaround Times	13
3.8	Retention of formalin fixed specimens.....	13
3.9	Notes	13
3.10	Specimen deliveries to the laboratory.....	14
4.	OTHER SPECIALIST SERVICES.....	15
4.1	Dermatopathology.....	15
4.2	Head & Neck/Oral Pathology.....	15
4.3	Muscle and Nerve Histochemistry	15
4.4	Soft Tissue Tumours	15
5.	Referral Services.....	16
6.	References.....	17
7.	Appendix 1: Full Contact Details for all Histology Laboratories in Synnovis.....	18

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Synnovis Histology User handbook is intended to serve as a user guide to the Histopathology services available from the Hub Laboratory as well as Cellular Pathology Laboratories based at St Thomas' Hospital, Guy's Hospital, Kings College Hospital, Princess Royal University Hospital and Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals. It is aimed for use by all staff groups involved with requesting Histological investigations.

The user handbook consists of five individual documents:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| • TS-GST-HIS-POL1 | Histology User Guide - GSTT |
| • TS-HUB-POL2 | Histology User Guide – Hub & ESL |
| • TS-KD-POL1 | Histology User Guide – KCH Denmark Hill |
| • TS-KP-POL1 | Histology User Guide - PRUH |
| • TS-RBH-HIS-POL1 | Histology User Guide – RBHH |

This guide is for teams using services at the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH) Site.

1.2 ABOUT US

The Synnovis Analytics Histopathology service comprises of a Hub Laboratory, situated at Blackfriars, with Essential Service Laboratories (ESLs) at our partner Trust sites:

- Guy's and St Thomas Hospitals
- Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital
- Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (Denmark Hill)
- Princess Royal University Hospital

Routine core laboratory operations and non-urgent tests will be received either directly at the Hub laboratory, or at the ESL sites and then transferred to the Hub laboratory for further processing. Urgent tests (primarily frozen sections, where results are required immediately to guide surgery) will be delivered close to patients in ESLs on the four main hospital sites.

The ESLs will therefore serve as a delivery point for samples at the Hospital sites, before they are transferred to the Hub laboratory for processing.

1.2.1 Accreditation of our Services

At the time of writing, histopathology tests and services provided by the Hub laboratory, St Thomas Hospital, King's College Hospital, Royal Brompton and Harefield and Princess Royal University Hospital are not UKAS accredited. Once the service migration to the Hub laboratory has completed (scheduled to be completed in autumn 2025), the Histopathology services at these sites will undergo assessment for accreditation under ISO15189:2022 throughout 2026.

1.2.2 Services and Specialities

Histopathology is a core diagnostic pathology service that involves the study of tissue structures in disease process and plays a major role in cancer diagnosis and patient management.

The Synnovis Histopathology laboratories provide a comprehensive tissue diagnostic service to hospitals networked within the Southeast London Cancer network and local general practitioners. It serves the regional cancer centre and is also a national and international referral centre for expert opinion. The specialist diagnostic and scientific teams aim to deliver a high-quality service with cutting edge diagnostic techniques through close links with the genetics and molecular diagnostics department. Multidisciplinary team meetings (MDM) are held across sites enabling close integration of clinical teams and specialist pathologists.

Areas of expertise include:

- Adult and Perinatal / Paediatric autopsy
- Bone, joints and synovial (BJS)
- Breast
- Cardiovascular System (CVS)
- Endocrine
- General
- Gastrointestinal
- Gynaecology
- Haematopathology
- Liver
- Perinatal
- Renal (Adult and Paediatric including Transplantation)
- Respiratory
- Urology

The laboratory works in conjunction with:

- Cytology and the St. John's Dermatopathology Laboratories at St. Thomas' Hospital (skin samples),
- Head and Neck/Oral Pathology (head & neck and maxillo-facial samples) at Guy's Hospital,
- And the Institute of Liver Studies Laboratories at King's College Hospital.

Frozen sections

In addition to processing fixed tissue, the department offers a frozen section service at Princess Royal University Hospital, incorporating receipt of fresh tissue for diagnostic purposes, enzyme histochemistry, research, clinical trials and tissue banking.

Immunocytochemistry and molecular pathology

Advanced Diagnostics is a section within the Histopathology department which, offers immunocytochemistry, chromogenic and fluorescent in-situ hybridisation and molecular testing.

The laboratory is a referral centre for HER-2 and PD-L1 testing.

The laboratory offers B and T cell rearrangement, IGHV somatic hypermutation by NGS (Next Generation Sequencing) and MLH1 promoter methylation at King's College Hospital.

Cytopathology

Cytopathology is provided at all sites, and these laboratories have their own user guides – please refer to these for use of these services. They are available from the Synnovis website (for that laboratory and location).

2. CONTACT US

The Histopathology department is located on second floor of the South Wing, Princess Royal University Hospital. All visitors should access the department via the main entrance and report to reception where they will be directed to a named individual.

2.1 Contact address

Histopathology Department
Pathology Laboratory (Synnovis LLP) Level 2, South Wing
Princess Royal University Hospital,
Farnborough Common,
Orpington,
Kent, BR6 8ND

2.2 Contact and enquiries

Histology Enquiries Tel 01689 864311/2

Email: kch-tr.histology@nhs.net

2.2.1 Clinical Advice and Interpretation

If you are calling for clinical advice and interpretation of the histopathology report, the secretarial staff will put you through to the Consultant Pathologist reporting the case you require, or email kch-tr.histology@nhs.net.

2.3 Hours of opening

The department is open from 09:00 – 17:00, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays).

There is currently no out-of-hours service at this laboratory.

2.4 Clinical staff contact details

The full lists of Consultant Pathologist staff at Princess Royal University Hospital is available on the Trust website.

Clinical Lead

Dr Meenal Gupta: meenalgupta@nhs.net

Tel: Via Histology office on 01689 864311/2

2.5 Service Leads

Operations Service Director

Khadijah Owusu-Ansah: khadijah.owusu-ansah@synnovis.co.uk

Deputy Operations Service Director

Histology: Getnet Demissie: getnet.demissie@synnovis.co.uk

Operations Manager

Histology: Lyn Golding lyn.golding@synnovis.co.uk

Advanced Diagnostics: Miguel Evaristo Miguel.evaristo@synnovis.co.uk

Senior Quality Manager

Fiona Denham Fiona.denham@synnovis.co.uk

Quality Manager

Karen Boniface karen.boniface@synnovis.co.uk

2.6 Complaints

Complaints may be made directly to the department, via PALS or via Synnovis Customer Support. Complaints are handled according to the Synnovis Complaints Policy and Procedure located at <http://www.synnovis.co.uk/customer-service>.

2.7 Protection of patient information

All patient information is handled under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018. All personal information received by Synnovis is dealt with according to the Synnovis Privacy, Data Protection & Cookie Policy which is available at <http://www.synnovis.co.uk/privacy-policy>.

3. HISTOPATHOLOGY INFORMATION

The majority of specimens for histological investigations must be placed in 10% neutral buffered formalin as soon as possible following removal to ensure that the tissue sample is preserved as much as possible to its life like state. The fixative acts as a preservative arresting the deleterious effects of putrefaction and autolysis. It also hardens and alters the tissue chemically in such a way that it is not harmed by the effects of processing and allows for histological tests to be performed.

In difficult or unusual cases, any query concerning correct tissue preparation should be directed to the Core Laboratory by telephoning PRUH Ext: **64317**.

3.1 Fixatives and specimen containers

The type of fixative and container required for a specimen is described in Table 1 below.

Specimen Type	Fixative	Container
Biopsies	10% neutral buffered formalin	Small plastic jar 60 ml
Cervical biopsies	10% neutral buffered formalin	Universal container 30 ml or Small plastic jar 60 ml
Routine Histology	10% neutral buffered formalin	Universal container 30 ml
		Small plastic jar 60 ml
		Large jar 350 ml
		Plastic buckets 1.8, 2.5, 5 and 10 litre.
Bone marrow trephine	10% neutral buffered formalin	Small plastic jar 60 ml or Universal container 30 ml

Table 1 - specimen types and fixation requirements

Specimens must not be squashed into containers inadequate for their size and should be covered by at least 10 to 20 times their volume with fixative.

3.1.1 Formalin

Specimens are normally received in **10% neutral buffered formalin** unless specifically stated in Table 1.

Formalin is a clear fluid with a pungent toxic vapour. Samples collected in formalin should be kept at ambient room temperature (18-25°C) for optimal fixation of the tissue. Samples in formalin **should not** be stored in a fridge as this hinders fixation.

Formalin pots must be checked for leakage and expiry date; also, handle carefully using gloved hands. If pots are beyond their expiry date, return to Histopathology for disposal. In the event of a formalin spillage, wipe it immediately with a De-Formalizer pad; wash the affected area with water and wash your hands.

3.1.2 Hazards

Formalin is a hazardous substance and care is to be taken when in use. Beware of spills and inhaling vapour, as formaldehyde is a toxic agent that may cause mild to severe irritation of skin and mucous membranes. Wear gloves when opening a specimen pot, tighten the lid when closing, and place the labelled specimen pot into a plastic pathology specimen bag. Wash off any spills with copious amounts of water.

3.1.3 Stock specimen containers

New stocks of filled formalin pots can be obtained from Histology Specimen Reception. All containers carry a specimen label and hazard sign. Containers may be provided on submission of the appropriate request form (below). These must clearly state the requirements and destination for the consumables.

Requisition Form - Pathology Laboratory Supplies

5 working days' notice **MUST** be given for all orders
Tel: 01689 864321 Email kch-tr.pruhpathstores@nhs.net

Contact details for order:	Name and telephone	
Date: __ / __ / 20 __	Surgery/Clinic/Ward Address	

- Users are requested to maintain adequate supplies. The laboratory is not always able to meet requests on demand.
- For consumable requests from Trust users, delivery of stores between the south sites is by twice-weekly hospital transport. Allow for 2 working days plus any delivery delay when making your order.
- Whilst every effort is made to meet the needs of users, it is not always possible to fill urgent telephoned orders immediately.
- It is important to rotate stock and ensure that any nearing expiry date is returned to the laboratory for use elsewhere or if expiry has been exceeded, stock is discarded.

3.2 Specimens that should be pre-booked (24 hours' notice)

Type of specimen	How to be received	Who needs to be contacted
Rapid Frozen section	Unfixed (dry pot) URGENT	Inform the laboratory 24 hours prior Ext 89191 See Section 3.3

Table 2 - specimens requiring pre-booking

3.3 Frozen sections

All frozen sections **must** be pre-booked with the department **24 hours in advance** as a Consultant Pathologist and BMS have to be made available.

To make a booking contact the Histopathology Office on ext: 89191 and give:

- Patient details,
- The estimated time of frozen section,
- Theatre details
- Surgeon name and contact/bleep

If there is a delay in operation contact the Histopathology laboratory and indicate the new time of the frozen section. In the event of cancellation please notify the department.

Any biohazard should be indicated on the request and specimen. Any indication of infection type would be advantageous. Please note that as there are no separate containment facilities for the handling of unfixed 'high-risk' tissue (e.g. TB, HIV, HBsAg), a frozen section service cannot be provided on these cases.

Specimens must be delivered immediately to the histopathology laboratory, See section 3.2 for information on how the specimen should be transported/received in the laboratory.

3.4 Requests and labelling

Each specimen should be labelled with the patient's name, date of birth, hospital number and NHS number, anatomical site and nature of tissue. It should have an accompanying Epic Beaker Request, or use of the downtime forms if Epic Beaker is unavailable.

The request must have the following details stated:

- **Patient's full name** (forename and family name)
- **Gender**
- **Date of birth**
- **Hospital number** (If sending samples from external sources such as GP surgeries, a hospital number need only be provided if it is known)
- **NHS Number**
- **Type of sample and anatomical site.** If more than one specimen from same patient, indicate the pot number and the specific specimen site.
- **Examination requested**

- **Consultant / clinician / healthcare provider** (name, contact details and address). The requesting clinician must sign and give a contact Telephone / bleep number.
- **Ward / clinic / patient location**
- **Date and time of sample collection**
- **Clinically relevant information** (required for examination performance and result interpretation purposes)
- **Funding details:** indicate if NHS, private, or contract funding

The sender will be contacted when histology samples are received without an appropriate request. Testing will be delayed until the request is corrected on Epic. This will be logged as an incident where testing is delayed, and patient care has been compromised on the Trust Adverse Incident reporting system (RADAR).

Please note: **The laboratory can accept request forms in various formats from external users.** Please contact the laboratory if you are unsure of the correct format for use. If necessary, the laboratory is willing to cooperate with users in order to clarify a request. The laboratory is able to provide confirmation of sample receipt.

3.4.1 Synnovis Tissue Sciences Downtime paper request form

This should only be used for urgent cases when the Epic system is not available.

Failure to complete details on a request form or specimen pot will mean a delay in issue of a result, and result in laboratory staff contacting the sender and requesting them to attend at the laboratory and fill in or correct the missing details.

3.4.2 Specimen labels

If possible, use computer generated labels that accompany patient notes. Fill in the specimen pot details using **a ballpoint pen or permanent marker**, not a fibre-tip pen where the ink will run should a spill occur.

All details should be filled, and where more than one specimen is taken, pot numbers and specimen information should match the details on the request card. At least two forms of personal ID must match, full name, and date of birth (and/or hospital number) together with the nature of specimen. ***A discrepancy will result in a delay in processing and could impact on patient management.***

3.5 Urgent Specimens and Cancer pathway requests

When requesting Histology on patients that are on a cancer pathway, select 'Urgent cancer pathway' or '2WW' for 2 Week-wait, if submitting an Epic request. If submitting a manual request form (e.g. in the event of Epic downtime), record 'urgent cancer pathway' or '2WW' on the form.

3.6 Referral Cases

Patient material sent for MDM review or second opinion are received into the department and allocated to a reporting consultant according to the speciality. When sending the material to the department use a traceable delivery system. It is also advisable to notify the office (kch-tr.histology@nhs.net) that material is being sent to the department. The blocks and slides should be securely packaged, to prevent loss/damage occurring. Refer to packaging instruction P650 for advice. The temperature of the material sent should be maintained at ambient temperature (15-25°C).

The laboratory must be informed upon delivery if any samples have been compromised (for example subjected to temperatures outside the stated range or in an event the safety of the carrier or the general public has been jeopardised).

These cases should be addressed to:

Histopathology Department
Pathology Laboratory (Synnovis LLP) Level 2, South Wing
Princess Royal University Hospital,
Farnborough Common,
Orpington,
Kent, BR6 8ND

Important: Specimen decalcification in acid solution are not recommended or validated for molecular testing and may generate invalid results. Please only provide specimen decalcified in EDTA solution.

3.7 Histology Turnaround Times

Sample / Test Type	Turnaround Times	Comment
Frozen sections	Up to one hour	Fresh tissue is usually prepared, sectioned and stained within 20 minutes. A report will be issued immediately. Clinical staff are encouraged to be present in the laboratory where possible.
Urgent specimens (cancer pathway)	Up to 7 days (biopsies), 10 days (excisions) (as per RCPATH Key Performance Indicators 2013)	State urgent on the request form. When an urgent biopsy is received during early to mid-morning the specimen may be prepared and reported on the same day. <i>Discuss with the speciality consultant before sending.</i> Specimens arriving in the afternoon or of other size will require a longer processing time and will be prepared for reporting the following morning by 11am. Indicate clearly who is to be contacted for a phoned report. Where further complex testing is required, a provisional opinion will be given.
Non urgent biopsies and large excision specimens	Up to 10 working days	Depending on size and degree of fixation, and if further testing is required, a result is normally issued within ten working days
Referral cases	Up to 15 working days	This is dependent on the level of testing required, but a result is normally issued within 15 working days
FISH & Molecular	Up to 14 working days	

Samples which require decalcification or additional tests (such as special stains and Immunohistochemistry) will take longer to report.

3.8 Retention of formalin fixed specimens

Formalin fixed specimens are only retained in the laboratory for four weeks following verification of the report, unless otherwise requested by the clinician at the time of the original request for Histopathology, or by the reporting Consultant Pathologist. In both cases, a reason must be specified for retention of the tissue beyond the four weeks post-authorisation of report.

3.9 Notes

Upon authorisation, histology reports are available on Epic in Patient Chart. In cases where requesters do not have access to Epic, electronic copies of reports are emailed to secure nhs.net email addresses only upon request.

The department is closed at the weekend and consequently results on specimens received on Friday will only be available by Monday or Tuesday at the earliest.

3.10 Specimen deliveries to the laboratory

The laboratory must be informed upon delivery if any samples have been compromised (for e.g. subjected to temperatures outside the stated range) or in an event where safety of the carrier or the general public has been jeopardised. The laboratory will action the issue by contact the sender to resolve or eliminate recurrence.

3.10.1 Samples from PRUH

The PRUH has an air-tube delivery system for samples to be transported to the Pathology laboratories. Histology samples of any kind, especially in formalin, **MUST NEVER BE SENT THROUGH THE TUBE SYSTEM.**

Portering staff will collect specimens from designated sites and deliver directly to Cellular Pathology, or central specimen reception.

Specimens are to be received in the Histopathology laboratory no later than 4.45pm.

Clearly mark all urgent specimens and any known biohazard such as HIV positive specimens.

Out of hours (17.00-09.00) specimens should be delivered to CSR or left in formalin at a collection point for the next morning collection.

3.10.2 Samples from surrounding sites

Samples are retrieved from designated collection points at Orpington and Beckenham Hospitals, and the regular inter-hospital transport provided by GSG, will collect and deliver the samples to pathology. There are transport runs between the PRUH laboratory the DH site and the Hub laboratory at Blackfriars too.

4. OTHER SPECIALIST SERVICES

4.1 Dermatopathology

The St. John's Dermatopathology Laboratory provides a specialist histopathology service for skin specimens, therefore Dermatology specimens should be sent directly to St John's Dermatopathology. Samples may be received in the main Histopathology laboratory but will be redirected to St. Johns Dermatopathology.

Other specific dermatology specimens will also be redirected as appropriate.

4.1.1 Contact:

St John's Dermatopathology
2nd Floor, Block C, South Wing
St. Thomas' Hospital
Dermatopathology Main Laboratory Ext 86327
Dermatopathology Laboratory Manager Ext 88160

4.2 Head & Neck/Oral Pathology

This laboratory provides services with a special interest in pathologies of the head and neck. For further information contact:

4.2.1 Contact:

Head and Neck/Oral Pathology
4th Floor, Tower Wing
Guy's Hospital
Laboratory: Ext 81756

4.3 Muscle and Nerve Histochemistry

Provides a service for surgical muscle (myopathies) and nerve biopsies. BMS assistance is available on request at muscle biopsies. **Note: these specimens are not received by the PRUH laboratory.**

4.3.1 Bookings / Information/ Contact

Clinical Neuropathology
1st Floor ANC building
King's College Hospital
Denmark Hill, SE5 9RS
Muscle biopsies: Janet Okafor (Institute of Psychiatry) 0203 2991957

4.4 Soft Tissue Tumours

Provides a specialist service for soft tissue tumours.
For further information contact

Dr. Eduardo Calonje Ext 86408

5. Referral Services

The referral laboratories used by our service are detailed below:

Some samples received within Histopathology (e.g. wet samples, unstained slides) may need to be forwarded to any of the labs listed. If received at any Histology Specimen Reception at any of our sites, they will be booked onto the LIMS system to enable tracking of the sample.

Please use the contact details of the receiving referral lab below if you have enquiries about your specimen/results. **IF SAMPLES ARE SENT DIRECTLY TO OTHER HOSPITALS/LABS**, our laboratories may not have a means of viewing results and in such cases - **results must be sought from the recipient referral lab**.

Reference lab	Contact for enquiries/results	Tests
Guys Hospital Cancer Specialist Diagnostic Services Great Maze Pond London SE1 9RT	Michael Neat m.neat@nhs.net Nicola Foot Nicola.foot@synnovis.co.uk	FISH (on a contingency basis) NTRK: ETV6-NTRK3 fusion
St Johns Dermatopathology St Thomas' Hospital Westminster Bridge Road London SE1 7EH	Dr Guy Orchard Guy.Orchard@synnovis.co.uk 0207 188 6327 St John's Institute of Dermatology 020 7188 6364	Immunohistochemistry (various antibodies)
Head & Neck Pathology Floor 4, Guy's Tower, Guy's Hospital, Great Maze Pond, London SE1 9RT	Dr Guy Orchard Guy.Orchard@synnovis.co.uk 0207 188 6327 Any queries regarding samples and reports should be directed to the Head & Neck department at synnovis.hnpath@nhs.net	Immunohistochemistry (various antibodies) Oral cases
Institute of Liver Studies King's College Hospital London SE5 9RS	James Croud 02032992237 James.croud@nhs.net	Immunochemistry (Hep Par1).
Neuropathology Lab King's College Hospital London SE5 9RS	General enquiries: (0)203 299 1951 For queries about tests please phone 020 3299 1957. To obtain results please phone 020 3299 1955 or 020 3299 1950.	Immunohistochemistry
HSL Advanced Diagnostics 60 Whitfield Street London W1T 4EU	Josep Linares AD Tel: +44 (0)20 3912 0280 Fax: +44 (0)20 3912 0288 E-Mail: advancediagnostics@hslpathology.com Website: www.hsl-ad.com	Immunochemistry (various antibodies) FISH

Genomic Health Inc 301 Penobscot drive Redwood City CA US	Customer service: 02030318087	Oncotype DX
Cyted UK Ltd 2 Falcon Road Hinchingsbrooke Business Park Huntingdon PE29 6FG	Vicky Edwards 07917691556 Vicky.edwards@cyted.ai Website: www.cyted.ai	Specimen Reporting
Department of Haematological Medicine Ground Floor Bessemer Wing King's College Hospital Denmark Hill London SE5 9RS United Kingdom	Service Delivery Manager Reference Haematology Department of Haematology and Blood transfusion Kings College Hospital Denmark Hill London SE5 9RS 020 3299 2455 (ext 32455 internal only) Robert Dunn- services manager	ABI AmpFLSTR kit multiplexed PCR reaction. Products analysed using Applied Biosystems 3130xl Genetic Analyser. DNA extraction (PB/BMA)
Poundbury Cancer Institute Newborough House 3 Queen Mother Square Poundbury, Dorchester Dorset DT1 3BJ	Dr Corrado D'Arrigo lab@histo.org <i>Tel: 01305 756485</i>	PD-L1 for Triple Negative Breast Cancer
UCL Institute of Ophthalmology Department of Eye Pathology 11-43 Bath Street London EC1V 9EL or via	Email : moorfields.pathioo@nhs.net or via telephone at 0207 608 6948 or 07407 324 945	'Eye' and 'eye-related' specimens
South East Genomic Lab Hub Cancer Genetics Genetics Laboratories 5 th Floor Tower Wing Guy's Hospital London SE1 9RT	synnovis.seglhsomaticcancer@nhs.net Richard Hall 020 7188 1702 Email: richard.hall@synnovis.co.uk Amy Roe - Cancer Genetics Operations Lead	Solid tumour genomic testing

6. References

1. European Committee for Standardization. Medical Laboratories – Requirements for quality & competence (ISO 15189:2022)
2. Royal College of Pathologists. G031 The retention and storage of pathological records and specimens, version 6. October 2025

7. Appendix 1: Full Contact Details for all Histology Laboratories in Synnovis

Location	Address	Contact Details
Histopathology Hub Laboratory	Histopathology 4 th Floor Synnovis Hub Laboratory Friars Bridge Court, 41-43 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NZ	020 4614 7519 or 020 4614 7522 Renal Hotline: Tel: 020 4614 7513
Histopathology, St Thomas's Hospital	Histopathology 2nd Floor, North Wing St. Thomas' Hospital Westminster Bridge Road London SE1 7EH	0207 188 7188 extension 54611
Histology, Royal Brompton Hospital	Cellular Pathology Royal Brompton Hospital Sydney Street London SW3 6NP	+44 (0)20 7351 8425
Histopathology, Harefield Hospital	Pathology Block - Histology Harefield Hospital Hill End Road Harefield UB9 6JH	+44 (0)1895 823 737
Histopathology, Kings College Hospital	Cellular Pathology 2nd Floor Bessemer Wing King's College Hospital Denmark Hill SE5 9RS	020 3299 3045 kch-tr.histopathologyoffice@nhs.net
Histopathology, Princess Royal University Hospital	Cellular Pathology Level 2, South Wing Princess Royal University Hospital Orpington Kent BR6 8ND	01689 864314 kch-tr.histology@nhs.net