

Freedom of Information Request

Ref: 23-138

20 March 2023

By Email

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Trust's response is as follows:

- We can confirm that we hold some of the information you are requesting

Questions for clinical team(s):

1. Of the following, which guidelines does your Trust follow for the diagnosis and treatment of meningitis/encephalitis: (Please answer: Yes/No)

- **NICE Guidelines (CG102) - Bacterial meningitis in under 16s: recognition, diagnosis and management**

Yes

- **UK Joint Specialist Societies guideline on the diagnosis and management of acute meningitis and meningococcal sepsis in immunocompetent adults (published 2016)**

Yes

- **Association of British Neurologists and British Infection Association National Guidelines – Management of suspected viral encephalitis in adults (published 2011)**

Yes

- **Association of British Neurologists and British Paediatric Allergy, Immunology and Infection Group National Guidelines – Management of suspected viral encephalitis in children (published 2011)**

No

2. Does your Trust have any locally developed/adapted guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of meningitis/encephalitis in both adults and paediatric patients?

No

If yes, please state which guidelines have been adapted and please provide a copy of your local guidelines.

Not applicable.

3. What are the top 3 roles in your Trust, in order of involvement, that are responsible for the development of local pathways and guidelines for meningitis/encephalitis?

If we were to develop local guidelines they would almost certainly be developed between consultants of the microbiology/infection team and acute medicine and approved by the standard trust divisional or trustwide pathways. However, I do not believe that they would differ significantly from national guidelines.

4. Does your Trust typically take samples of blood cultures from patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis within: (Please select answer)

- 1 hour of admission? Yes (adults)
- 2-4 hours of admission?
- 4-8 hours of admission?
- 8> hours of admission?

Children's: This would completely depend on the nature of presentation and (IMO) reflects an incomplete understanding of the condition they are enquiring about. If a child is considered highly likely to have meningitis/encephalitis at presentation, they will have a blood culture sent ASAP (usually <1 hour)

5. Does your Trust consistently carry out lumbar punctures in patients with no contradictions who have suspected meningitis/encephalitis? (Yes/No)

Yes

If yes, who performs the lumbar puncture? (Please specify job role)

Adults: Normally the lumbar punctures are done by SHOs and registrars in the medical team, although we sometimes seek help from anaesthetics.

Children's: Typically done by doctors working in either Paediatric Emergency Medicine or General Paediatrics or Paediatric Intensive Care Unit.

6. Does your Trust consistently take cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) samples via lumbar puncture from patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis within: (Please select answer)

- 1 hour of admission?
- 1-2 hours of admission?
- 2-4 hours of admission?
- 4-8 hours of admission? Yes (Adults)
- 8-12 hours of admission?
- >12 hours of admission?

Children's: This would completely depend on the nature of presentation. If a child is considered highly likely to have meningitis/encephalitis at presentation, they will have a CSF sample sent ASAP (usually <1 hour)

7. Does your Trust administer antibiotics to patients where appropriate prior to taking blood culture and CSF samples? (Yes/No)

Adults: No

Children's: Yes

8. Does your Trust consistently administer antibiotics to patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis within: (Please select answer)

- 1 hours of admission? Yes (adults and children's)
- 2-4 hours of admission?
- 4-8 hours of admission?
- 8> hours of admission?

Questions for lab team(s):

9. Which of the following guidelines does your Trust follow for the microbiological investigation of meningitis/encephalitis: (Please select: Yes/No)

- UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations – Meningoencephalitis (published 2014)
- UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations – Investigation of Cerebrospinal Fluid (published 2017)

Please contact North Bristol NHS Trust at foi@nbt.nhs.uk for this information.

10. Does your Trust have any local adaptations or amendments to the two UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations listed in the above question?

If yes, please provide a copy of your local amendments.

Please contact North Bristol NHS Trust at foi@nbt.nhs.uk for this information.

11. Following lumbar puncture on a patient with suspected meningitis/encephalitis, how long are the turnaround times from point of receiving specimen to result on the following tests: (Please select answer for each result)

- a) Cell count (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)
- b) Gram staining (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)
- c) Bacterial culture (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)
- d) PCR (<1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours or >4 hours)

Please contact North Bristol NHS Trust at foi@nbt.nhs.uk for this information.

12. Where does your Trust process CSF samples?

Please contact North Bristol NHS Trust at foi@nbt.nhs.uk for this information.

13. Does your Trust perform PCR testing to test samples from patients with suspected meningitis/encephalitis? (Yes/No)

Please contact North Bristol NHS Trust at foi@nbt.nhs.uk for this information.

14. If PCR testing is carried out in your Trust, which bacterial and viral pathogens are

tested for? (Please separate your answer by bacterial and viral pathogens)

Please contact North Bristol NHS Trust at foi@nbt.nhs.uk for this information.

This concludes our response. We trust that you find this helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact us directly if we can be of any further assistance.

If, after that, you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Data Protection Officer
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters
Marlborough Street
Bristol
BS1 3NU

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Publication

Please note that this letter and the information included/attached will be published on our website as part of the Trust's Freedom of Information Publication Log. This is because information disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act is disclosed to the public, not just to the individual making the request. We will remove any personal information (such as your name, email and so on) from any information we make public to protect your personal information.

To view the Freedom of Information Act in full please click [here](#).

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust