



Birmingham Quality

UK NEQAS
International Quality Expertise

Birmingham Quality
PO Box 3909
Birmingham
B15 2UE

*for the attention of all our valued
Participants and Distributors*

T +44 (0)121 414 7300
<https://birminghamquality.org.uk>
birminghamquality@uhb.nhs.uk

Wednesday, 06 January 2021

January 2021 and Covid-19

Dear Colleagues

I know everyone will have enough to be worrying about, both in terms of work and home life, so I will keep this brief.

Our services are running as normal. If we have to change anything, we will let you know on our website.

As far as the handling of late results or how we deal with the situation of our Participants not being able to analyse results for whatever reason (staff issues, not offering a service etc etc), we have learned much from the last 'Lockdown'.

We will continue to send out specimens. These have already been paid for.

If you can't return results, we will ask you to record this fact for each Distribution affected. There is a single check box that flags the full set of results with the 'XPL' flag and this will not count against you in terms of Return Rates and the like. If you just quote "Covid-19" as the reason for not having results this will satisfy us. It is better for us to record all such occurrences so we can see the extent of the situation. If you are concerned about what your current Quality System or Accreditation body is expecting you to do, please cross-reference with the following Planned Deviation from our QMS (2021-CC-1).

"During the Covid-19 Pandemic and 2021 Lockdown situation, we can confirm that Birmingham Quality will be recording and monitoring return rates and participation status and will continue to report these on reports as normal. What is different is that whilst we continue to quote your Participation, Late Returns and Amendments ratings on the Participation Summary Page, we will NOT be enforcing these criteria. This stance will be reviewed at the end of March 2021 and if we decide to continue with this approach, we will inform Participants again at that time."

We would expect that Participants record this in their own QMS and be pragmatic in their approach. It is our experience that many Participants often create unrealistic expectations for themselves, erroneously believing that this is being forced upon them by Birmingham Quality/UK NEQAS, which is most definitely not the case. This is true for how they handle both analytical errors and participation status. We are on the side of Quality, not on the side of box ticking for the sake of it! 😊

Best regards

Yours faithfully

Finlay MacKenzie

Finlay MacKenzie
Director Birmingham Quality



Birmingham Quality provides primarily UK NEQAS services and is a UKAS accredited proficiency testing provider No. 7860.

Please see the schedule for full details of the accreditation status of our schemes.

Birmingham Quality is part of the NHS. It is based at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and is part of University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.