

Key Discussion Points for Safe Test and Results Handling

To make your results handling systems safer, you may want to use these questions as a prompt for discussion during a practice staff meeting¹. You may also want to use these questions as a way to monitor improvement.

Systems

Does our practice have an approach to results handling, which is outlined in a formal protocol?

How does our practice ensure the results are work-flowed, reviewed and acted on in a timely manner?

How does our practice ensure it actions emergency test results communicated by the laboratory?

Do we have agreed standards for reviewing results in a timely manner?

How does our practice handle results when a clinician is absent from the practice (for example on leave or due to illness) and/or when a locum orders tests?

Tracking

What is our practice's tracking system for reconciling samples out with results returned and ensure appropriate clinical follow up?

Communication

How do clinicians record what blood tests are required to be taken?

Does our practice – including non-clinical staff – have agreed wording for communicating test results to patients? **(see examples of communication)**

Training

Are staff competent in their individual roles and responsibilities as part of the results handling system, including the electronic ordering system?

How are staff, including locums, trained in the results handling system?

Patient involvement

How do we capture patient feedback on our results handling system?

How does our practice help patients understand the results handling system – and when and how to access their test results? **(see sample patient information leaflet)**

How does our practice record that it has notified patients of their results and actions required?

¹ More information can be found on the NHS Education for Scotland website at:
<http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/patient-safety-and-clinical-skills/safe-results/our-outputs.aspx>

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