

Pathology User Survey Report 2025/6

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Introduction

There are many different users of the Pathology service including those internal to MTW e.g. doctors, pharmacy, nurses, other allied health professionals and those external to MTW e.g. the GPs who have commissioned the Trust to undertake their Pathology work, local hospices, other organisations (both NHS and private) who have a contract with MTW Pathology for diagnostic service provision.

Continuous engagement with these users is in place through day-to-day interactions, review meetings, MDMs, complaints and compliments and general liaisons regarding informal enquires. Pathology also undertakes an annual user survey to gain anonymous feedback regarding the scope of services which can also be used in preparation for business planning/ quality objectives for the directorate, As part of the commitment to a continuous quality improvement programme and a quality management system based on understanding and meeting the needs of users.

Methodology

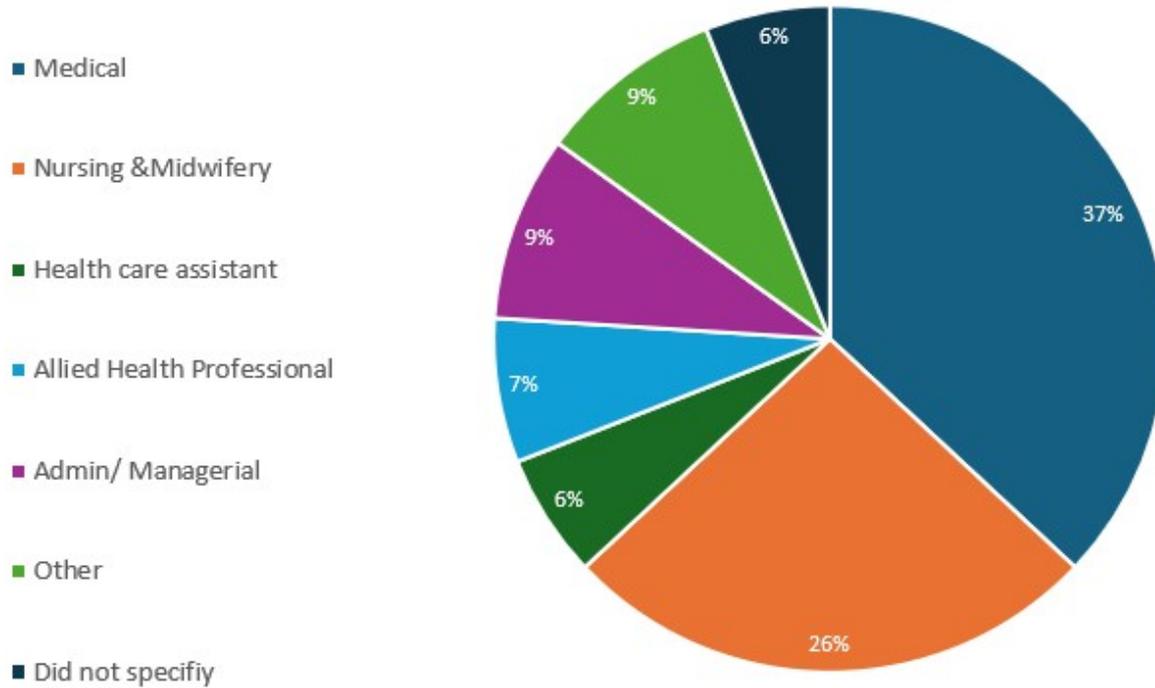
This year's (2025/6) user survey was distributed in December 2025 and closed at the end of January 2026. The survey was available to all Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW) employees, all General Practice (GP) managers and practitioners and to key contacts of all other external users e.g. KIMS, hospices and referring hospitals.

A link to each respective survey was made available to the group of users by appearing in the MTW daily Pulse, advertised on the MTW intranet news stories and sent to all resident Doctors by the trust medical education team. The survey was also sent by e-mail to GP Practice managers and to contacts within all other external users of the service.

2025/6 Response Groups

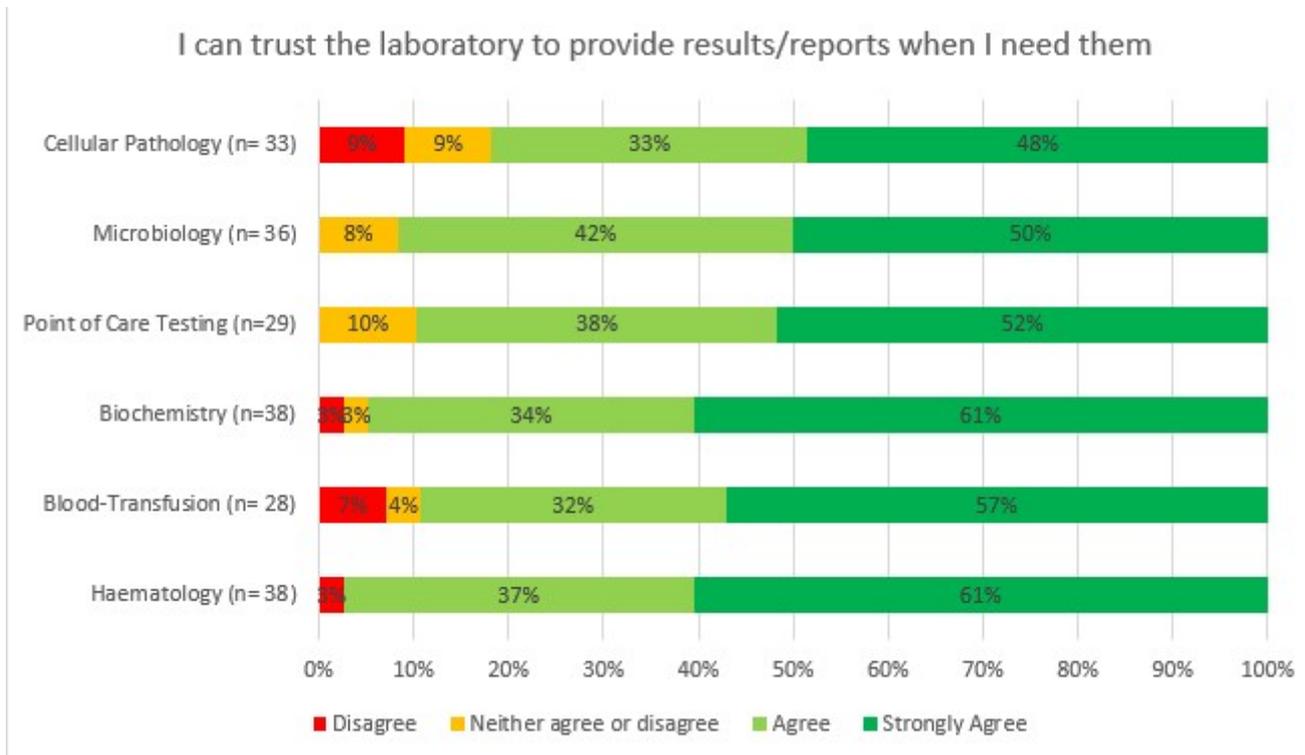
The survey was open for five weeks and 50 individuals responded, including 20 MTW Medical Staff and 14 MTW nursing staff.

Responses received by staff group



Results

Question 1. I can trust the laboratory to provide results/reports when I need them



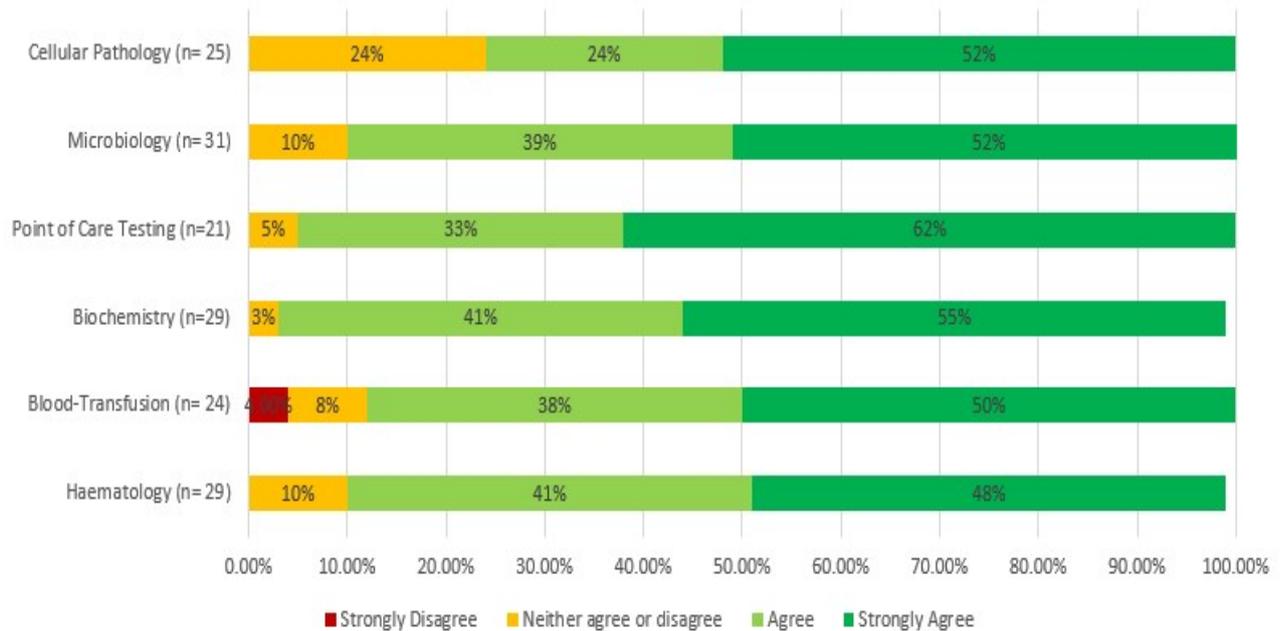
Comments received	Pathology Action taken/Comments:
Very useful to have histopathology meetings with Dr Joyti Gupta	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
Cellular pathology very slow. Haem and Biochem results also take longer than ideal for rapid patient assessment)	<p>Thank you for your feedback. Unfortunately, there is insufficient information provided to determine which specific tests this refers to.</p> <p>Turnaround times are routinely monitored for assays identified as Key Performance Indicators, as a reflection of overall laboratory performance, and current data indicates that performance is generally good.</p> <p>For Haematology, turnaround times for urgent Full Blood Count (FBC) results (target reporting time within 1 hour) are consistently achieving approximately 95% compliance.</p> <p>For Biochemistry, turnaround times for urgent potassium results (target reporting time within 1 hour) are currently achieving approximately 85% compliance. Work is ongoing to identify areas for improvement within the specimen pathway in order to further improve turnaround time performance.</p> <p>If you are able to provide further details regarding the specific tests or examples of cases you are referring to, we</p>

	<p>would be happy to review these further.</p> <p>Cellular Pathology is aware of the need to improve turnaround times. This is a nationally recognised challenge within the service, influenced by several factors, most notably the national shortage of Consultant Pathologists available to report an increasing diagnostic workload. An extensive improvement programme has been underway within Cellular Pathology. This has included the recruitment of additional Consultant Histopathologists, scientists and support staff; increased laboratory automation; the introduction of new equipment; and the implementation of Digital Pathology. These measures are already beginning to show improvements. The percentage of diagnostic cancer pathway cases reported within 10 calendar days of sample receipt has increased from 31% in April 2025 to 68% in February 2026. Further improvements are expected as these initiatives continue to be embedded within the service.</p>
In general, the lab provides a very good service. There does seem to be times where multiple patients' bloods haemolyse, and they insist it's not the machine despite bloods taken by multiple different clinicians	<p>Thank you for your feedback. Haemolysed samples are rejected by the laboratory because haemolysis can interfere with analysis and may produce inaccurate results. To help avoid haemolysis, it is recommended that samples are mixed gently by inversion three to four times for clotting studies (blue top bottles) and eight to ten times for all other samples. If a cannula is used for collection, it should also be noted that drawing back on the cannula can increase the risk of haemolysis.</p>
Some delay in micro results but overall good service. Histopath when sent to Manchester from Fordcombe site, never see those results. Can take a while to get TPMT levels back as they go to London lab.	<p>Thank you for your feedback. This has been shared with the team.</p> <p>Histopathology testing for Fordcombe patients is provided through a separate service and is currently not under the remit of MTW Pathology</p>
Results provided ASAP	<p>Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.</p>
Older tests are extremely difficult to find on the system. Unable to see all community results.	<p>Thankyou for your feedback, this has been fed back to the IT team.</p> <p>MTW Pathology is part of the Kent and Medway Pathology Network (KMPN) who are currently working on a project to integrate Pathology results into the Kent and Medway Care Record (KMCR).</p>

<p>The TAT for tests has really improved but occasionally this does not happen, and delays occur which affects out TAT to give patient results, but this is an exceptional occurrence.</p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback. Unfortunately, there is insufficient information provided to determine which specific tests this refers to.</p> <p>Turnaround times are routinely reviewed for assays identified as Key Performance Indicators, as a reflection of the overall laboratory service, and current monitoring indicates that performance is generally in a good position. Occasionally, the laboratory may experience periods of equipment breakdown which, despite the implementation of business continuity measures, can temporarily impact turnaround times. The laboratory strives to communicate any such disruptions to service users whenever possible.</p>
<p>POCT passwords reset or account block without warning and by their nature are required urgently.</p> <p>Sometimes data is more easily found in its entirety on pathlab but don't have access</p>	<p>POCT accounts have a validity period of two years, and a 30-day warning of expiry is given to users which appears on the devices every day during this period upon log-in. Completion of e-learning is required for access to continue and this is available to complete 24/7. If there are any issues, please contact the POCT team mtw-tr.POCT@nhs.net or 01892 635962, 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday.</p> <p>POCT results are not available to LIMS system- these are currently only available on sunrise.</p>
<p>Our histology for LGI MDM is always extremely timely and thoroughly explained extra moleculars are usually done automatically according to clinical need without further requests needed.</p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.</p>
<p>Oftentimes, Biochemistry results for MITU don't come until request for result is made by phone</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. This has been fed back to the Biochemistry team, who are currently reviewing the laboratory workflow when ITU samples are received between 5:00am and 7:00am. The team is aiming to identify areas for improvement in the processing and reporting of these samples.</p>

Question 2. I am satisfied with the quality of professional advice that I receive from the laboratory

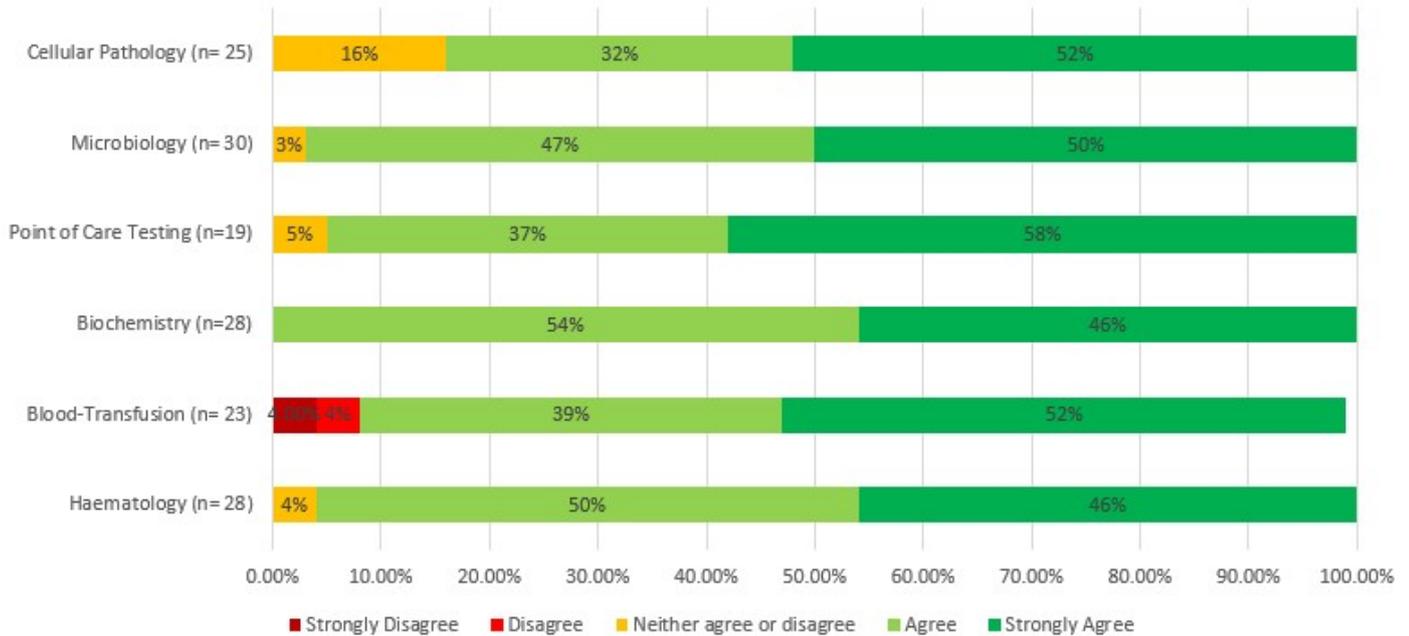
I am satisfied with the quality of professional advice that I receive from the laboratory



Comments received	Pathology Action taken/Comments:
Point of care testing always helpful during paediatric induction	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
Can be hard to get in contact with duty biochemist, but when you do, they are helpful	Thank you for your feedback. This has been shared with the Clinical Biochemistry team. The Duty Biochemist can be contacted by phone Monday to Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm. If the line is unavailable, there is an answerphone message with instructions and the option to leave a voicemail. There is also a Rego A&G system available for contacting the Duty Biochemist.

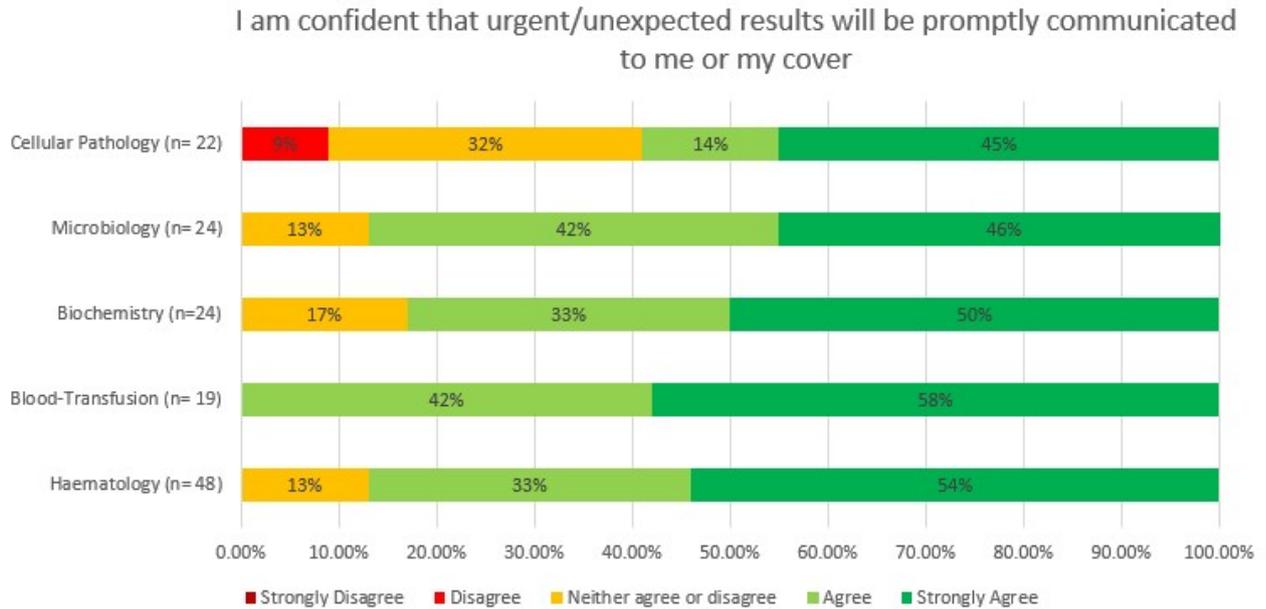
Question 3. Professional advice is readily available from the laboratory when needed

Professional advice is readily available from the laboratory when needed.



Comments received	Pathology action taken/Comments:
I have need help many times after a complex procedure such as lumbar puncture in paediatrics and adult and other complex blood processes such as synacthen test. I found out all the time somebody experienced helped me	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.

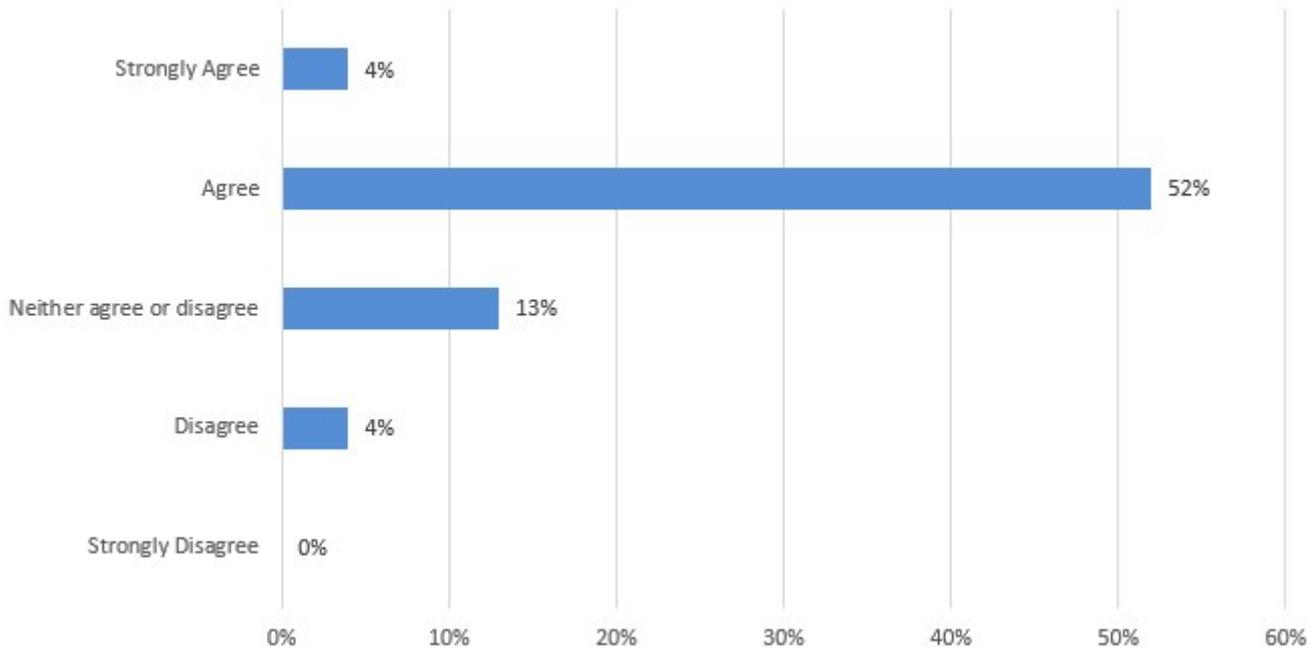
Question 4. I am confident that urgent/ unexpected results will be promptly communicated to me or my cover



Comments received	Pathology action taken/Comments:
<p>Cancerous and pre-cancerous results should be sent through as an urgent to the sender. I am occasionally contacted out of hours (approx 7-8.30pm) by very abnormal biochemistry results (eg high blood glucose) due to transport issues meaning that samples do not arrive at the lab in a timely way - not sure you can do anything about that but the process we have in place at least allows you to know who to contact which I think was good to set up and works! Think your involvement with hospital transport team should be encouraged and included in this survey.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Histopathologists report any unexpected cancer results to the requesting clinician and make every effort to notify the relevant department or Trust if the requester cannot be clearly identified from the request form. All cancer SNOMED codes are identified and distributed to the relevant clinical MDM teams. While responsibility for reviewing reports remains with the requesting clinician, the department takes responsibility for the notification of unexpected results. This process is embedded within routine practice and is outlined in the relevant standard operating procedures.</p>
<p>They are very strict with that. They really do that.</p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.</p>

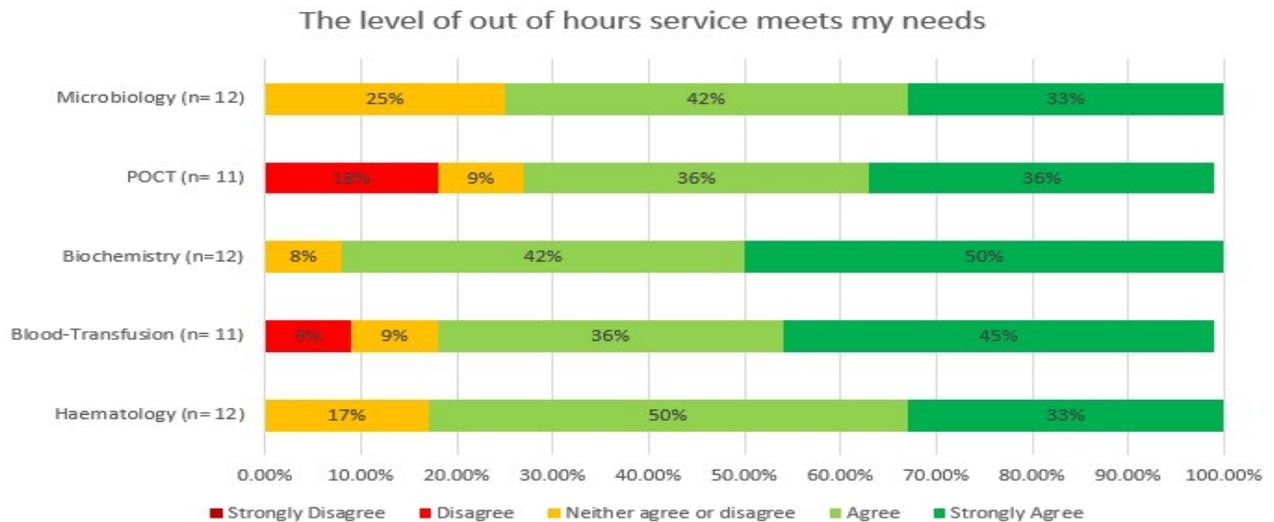
Question 5. Local systems to collect and transport specimens work well

Local systems to collect and transport specimens work well (n=23)



Comments received	Pathology action taken/Comments:
When porters are available works really well	Thank you for your feedback and for highlighting this issue. We wanted to clarify that the portering service is managed separately from the laboratory and therefore falls outside our direct remit. We appreciate that timely transport of samples is extremely important, and we encourage any queries or concerns about portering to be directed to the relevant service team.
As much as possible. I think Maidstone needs POD system everywhere instead of using transporter for all delivery.	Thank you for your feedback and for bringing this to our attention. The pneumatic tube system is managed by the Trust Estates and Facilities team rather than the laboratory. We have shared your comments with them so they are aware of your concerns and can take them into consideration.
Occasional issues with communication, but mostly good	Thank you for your feedback. Unfortunately, without further details regarding the communication issues, we are unable to investigate the matter further.

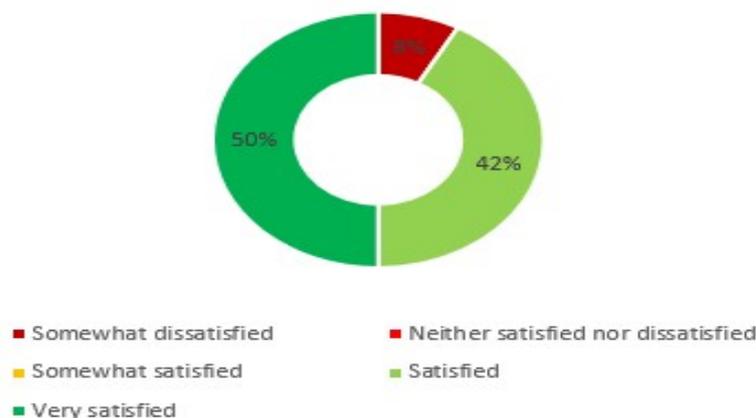
Question 6. The level of out of hours service meets my needs



POCT user accounts have a validity period of two years, and a 30-day warning of expiry is given to users which appears on the devices every day during this period upon log-in. Completion of e-learning is required for access to continue and this is available to complete 24/7. If there are any issues, please contact the POCT team mtw-tr.POCT@nhs.net or 01892 635962, 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday. Spare devices and consumables are available 24/7 in Omnicell cabinets (ground floor outside M&S Maidstone Hospital/ Green zone level -1 and Purple Zone level -2 Tunbridge Wells Hospital). If training and access is required, please contact the POCT team (mtw-tr.POCT@nhs.net or 01892 635962, 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday).

Question 7. How satisfied are you with the response time for any queries/issues that you have raised to the POCT team (n=12)?

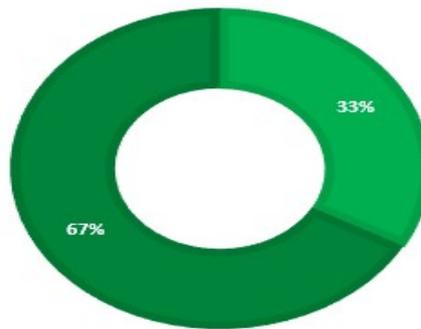
How satisfied are you with the response time for any queries/issues that you have raised to the POCT team?



Question 8. How satisfied are you with the availability of training from the POCT team? (n=12)

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING FROM THE POCT TEAM?

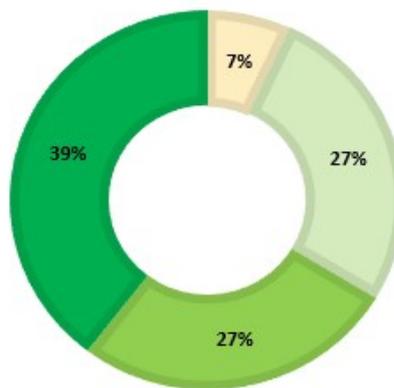
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied



Question 9. How satisfied are you with the availability of POCT testing devices (n=15)?

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE AVAILABILITY OF POCT TESTING DEVICES?

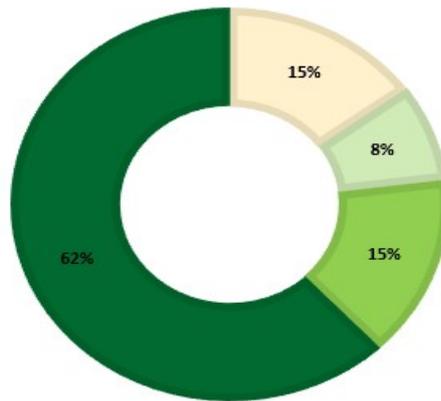
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied



Question 10. How satisfied are you with the availability of POCT reagents (n=13)?

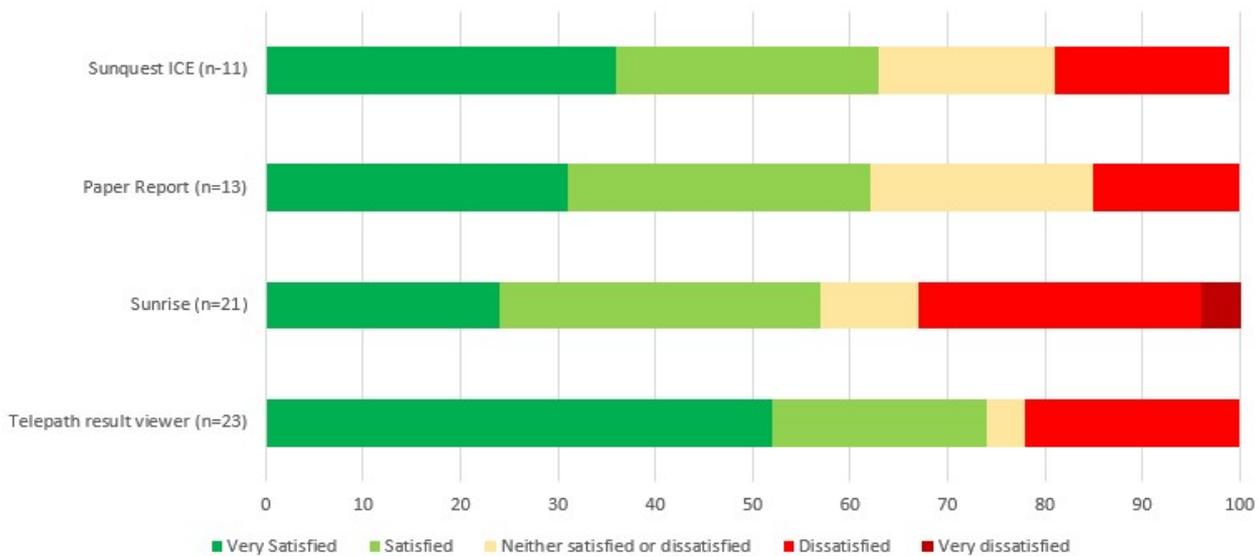
HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE AVAILABILITY OF POCT REAGENTS?

■ Very dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Somewhat dissatisfied
■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Satisfied
■ Very satisfied



Question 11. How satisfied are you with the accessibility of results in the following formats?

How satisfied are you with the accessibility of results in the following formats?

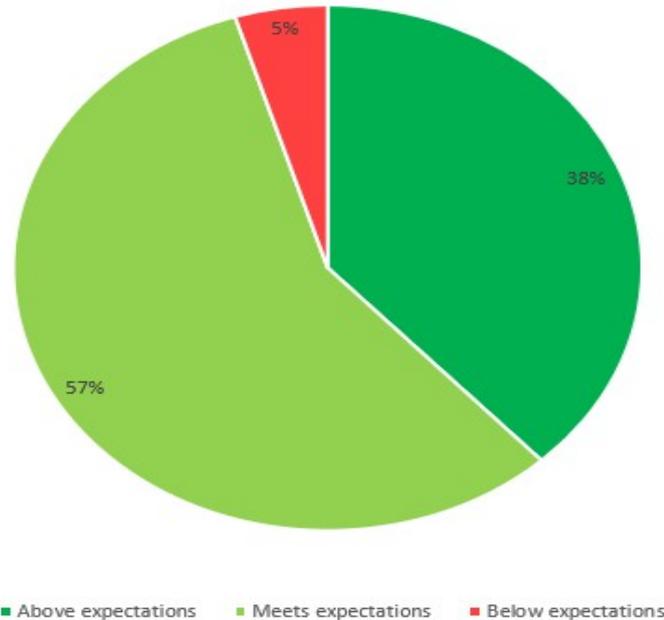


Comment received	Pathology action taken/Comments:
Sunrise results viewer was dangerous when the cumulative results were changed to back to front	Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Trust Sunrise EPR Team.

<p>For the same biopsy multiple reports are produced (e.g. ER, PR vs HER 2) These results are reported on different systems with different specimen numbers. For the same patient there may be multiple biopsies taken on the same day and correlating these results on different systems is frustrating, time consuming and present a clinical risk. Especially since we can't cut & paste specimen numbers from sunrise or print the results. On telepath - I can cut and paste the NHS number into to the search box - but have to remove spaces and an individual patient's results are usually filed in multiple accounts. It is also frustrating that telepath logs out every 15 mins, so I have to log in to access results every OPA. Molecular test results (ctDNA) aren't filed on our systems. In future I anticipate multiple tests will be done through a patient's journey. This complex (& expensive) information is at risk of being lost.</p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback and suggestions. These have been shared with the Cellular Pathology team for review and discussion.</p>
<p>Telepath is best way to still see results. Sunrise displays results in a difficult to read way and trends hard to interpret for not standard tests, okay for basic bloods.</p>	<p>Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Trust Sunrise EPR Team.</p>
<p>I forgot telepath password and system does not allow you to recover it by yourself. I know if I mail telepath team, they will do it for me, but it happens frequently. Because some of the place we do not need it and forgot it</p>	<p>Where possible, Sunrise EPR should be used as the primary system for accessing and viewing results. We hope this helps reduce the need to access Telepath directly. Unfortunately, at present there is no alternative secure process for resetting Telepath passwords other than contacting the Pathology IT team. They are happy to assist with this if required</p>
<p>Sunrise- can't print results telepath - access taken away but sunrise not adequate enough</p>	<p>Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Trust Sunrise EPR Team.</p>

Question 12: How would you rate Pathology services overall?

How would you rate Pathology services overall? (n=21)



Other Comments Received

Comment received	Pathology action taken/Comments:
Delays in Histopathology results are my main concern - these have a significant impact on patient care	<p>Thank you for your feedback. Cellular Pathology is aware of the need to improve turnaround times. This is a nationally recognised challenge within the service, influenced by several factors, most notably the national shortage of Consultant Pathologists available to report an increasing diagnostic workload.</p> <p>An extensive improvement programme has been underway within Cellular Pathology. This has included the recruitment of additional Consultant Histopathologists, scientists and support staff; increased laboratory automation; the introduction of new equipment; and the implementation of Digital Pathology.</p> <p>These measures are already beginning to show improvements. The percentage of diagnostic cancer pathway cases reported within 10 calendar days of sample receipt has increased from 31% in April 2025 to 68% in February 2026. Further improvements are expected as</p>

	these initiatives continue to be embedded within the service.
Cannot sing the praises of the Lower GI cell path team enough esp Maria Haynes. They do their utmost to make sure our patients get their cancer diagnosis as quick as possible which gives us the confidence to manage our patients' expectations	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
Excellent, an asset to your services.	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
I access blood results from East Kent, North Kent and Maidstone. It is always a pleasure to see that the results I need are from a Maidstone based patient as I know I am much more likely to be able to find the results completed within a faster time. Thank you.	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
I would like patient duplicate entries to be merged so we don't have to choose one every time we look for a result.	Thank you for your feedback and for highlighting this issue. Unfortunately, we are unable to merge all requests because we rely on the correct patient information being provided on request forms to ensure results are accurately processed and attributed. Providing complete and accurate patient details helps us maintain patient safety and service quality.
There have been issues over the last year with availability of cellular pathology results impacting on patient care. I do appreciate that this reflects the immense pressure on the service. Some members of the team have been very open to discussing ways to address this.	Thank you for your feedback. Please see our previous responses above regarding the Cellular Pathology improvement project and turnaround times for further information.
Just to say thank you for providing what seems to be the best pathology service in Kent.	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
Pathology team all the time very kind and helpful. Even out of hours. Thanks to them	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.

Question 13: How could we improve our service?

Suggestion received	Pathology action taken/Comments:
Quicker turnaround	<p>Thank you for your feedback. Unfortunately, there is insufficient information provided to determine which specific tests this refers to.</p> <p>Turnaround times are routinely reviewed for assays identified as Key Performance Indicators, as a reflection of the overall laboratory service, and current monitoring indicates that performance is generally in a good position. Occasionally, the laboratory may experience periods of equipment breakdown which, despite the implementation of business continuity measures, can temporarily impact turnaround times. The laboratory strives to communicate any such disruptions to service users whenever possible.</p>
Improve display of results on Sunrise, make easier to read and do trends. Include micro and cell path results in same location.	Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Trust Sunrise EPR Team.
This is rare, sometimes results are available on Telepath but are not on our system	Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Pathology IT team.
Pods system at Maidstone side. I know in paediatrics at TWH there was POD system, but I do not know whole TWH have it. But it is extremely needed. we cannot rely on a nurse or ward team arrange a transporter and blood arrive pathology at time. I am not accusing the transport team or anybody else but if you increase steps, you increase error rate. So, after taking blood I am happy to send myself via POD.	<p>Thank you for your feedback and for bringing this to our attention.</p> <p>The pneumatic tube system is managed by the Trust Estates and Facilities team rather than the laboratory. We have shared your comments with them so they are aware of your concerns and can take them into consideration</p>
Flagging urgent and abnormal results more clearly on sunrise.	Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Trust Sunrise EPR Team.
Better / easier reactivation of POCT accounts	<p>POCT accounts have a validity period of two years, and a 30-day warning of expiry is given to users which appears on the devices every day during this period upon log-in. Completion of e-learning is required for access to continue and this is available to complete 24/7. If there are any issues, please contact the POCT team mtw-tr.POCT@nhs.net or 01892 635962, 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday.</p>
Not pathology department - but viewing	Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Trust

results on Sunrise can be confusing.	Sunrise EPR Team.
Allow blood collection at weekends to help blood taking at GP surgery throughout the day.	Thank you for your suggestion. Unfortunately, weekend blood collection is not currently possible due to staffing and operational constraints. We appreciate that this may be inconvenient, and we continue to work with GP practices and the MTW transport team to optimise sample collection during standard service hours.
Keep doing everything you are doing now - excellent.	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
I am happy with the service	Thank you for your feedback- this has been shared with the team.
Allow more users to access the results via Telepath as it is so much better to use.	Thank you, your feedback has been shared with the Trust Sunrise EPR Team.
Telephone lines open for GP surgery to call you is at 9am - we start seeing patients at 8am - maybe increase times in lab.	Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate that many surgeries open from 8:00am and understand that accessing results early in the day can be important. Unfortunately, laboratory staffing levels are reduced before 9:00am, and during this time our teams need to prioritise the processing of urgent samples. Because of this, we are not currently able to extend the telephone line opening hours. Results are available electronically via ICE, and there are also comprehensive user guides available on the pathology website which may be helpful. Pathology - Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

Closing Remarks

Thank you for taking your much-valued time to complete our survey. We realise how important your feedback is to our continued improvement and success. We hope to have your engagement in further surveys as they are used to help shape our service delivery to meet your needs.

For general feedback about Pathology services please email: Hayley.Williams15@nhs.net