

3rd March 2026

Dear Service User

The Oncology Cytogenetics laboratory (The Christie site of North West Genomics Laboratory Hub) has experienced unexpected staff shortage in recent weeks, due to unforeseen circumstances, which has reduced capacity for cytogenetic analysis.

As usual, we endeavour to provide the best quality of service possible and we continue to prioritise urgent referrals including new and relapsing acute leukaemia and other new cancer diagnosis and FISH. Unfortunately, lower priority referrals for karyotyping, such as possible low grade MDS/MPN and routine follow-ups, are experiencing delays (current reporting time 42 days, turnaround target 21 days). The ongoing issue has been escalated as a Trust incident and reported to NHSE.

We apologise for the prolonged reporting time of lower priority karyotypes. We are taking all possible measures to ease the situation, and staffing levels will be better in April, when we expect turnaround times to start to improve. The backlog of cases is being reviewed and, if appropriate, it may be possible to analyse samples more effectively by relevant alternative methods, such as SNP microarray. Please contact the laboratory by email (oncology.cytogenetics@nhs.net) if a result is required by a specific date; we will try and make results available at critical points for patient management.

Yours sincerely
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www.mft.nhs.uk

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