

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the transition of GP and Nursing Homes Microbiology Services from St Vincents University Hospital to Enfer Medical:

1. Why outsource?

Due to a staffing deficit in SVUH Microbiology department and to ensure optimal microbiology service is provided, SVUH has had to assess and reprioritise workload relating to patients in SVUH and must divert all microbiology work from GPs and Nursing Homes beginning the 28th July 2025.

2. Is Enfer Medical accredited?

Enfer Medical was successfully awarded the ISO15189:2022 certification by the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) and provides an extensive list of accredited tests in Microbiology.

3. How are samples picked up and transported?

Firstly, please note that there will be no change to existing courier service/arrangements.

Guidance will be provided to GPs and Nursing Homes explaining that all microbiology samples should be separated and packed in a dedicated Enfer Medical outer bag. Practices will be provided with UN3373 compliant bags with Enfer Medical branding, week commencing 21th July 2025. All samples for Microbiology must be placed directly into this bag and the bag must be sealed. This bag together with other samples destined for the laboratory in SVUH will continue to be delivered, picked up as per your current set-up and arrangements. The GP practice or Nursing Home can order additional transport bag with Enfer Medical. Please refer to the GP/Nursing Home user manual.

4. What is the cut-off time for sample collections?

Enfer Medical logistics will pick-up from SVUH will be Monday-Thursday at 15:00 & 18:00 and Friday at 15:00 & 19:00.

5. Do you provide courier services?

Enfer only collects samples from the laboratory at SVUH for delivery to Enfer.

6. Will samples need to be separated for a single courier?

Yes, all samples for microbiology must be separated and placed directly into a dedicated UN3373 outer bag provided by Enfer Medical and with a Practice ID label placed on the bag. Enfer Medical provides GP Practices and Nursing Homes with the outer bag and label IDs and the ordering process for this is included in the User Manual.

This bag together with other samples destined for the laboratory in SVUH will continue to be delivered, picked up as per your current set-up and arrangements. Please refer to the GP/Nursing Home user manual for more details.

7. Will any additional forms/paperwork will be required (or can we continue to use the same SVUH lab forms)?

GPs and Nursing Homes can use the SVUH Patient Request Form for microbiology samples destined for Enfer.

8. Will samples be logged into SVUH and then redirected or bypass SVUH completely and go direct to Enfer?

No. Samples will not be logged in SVUH. Samples will be picked up by Enfer from SVUH in the designated bags and logged in Enfer on arrival.

9. If patients drop a sample directly to St Vincent's from a GP or Nursing Home will it be processed there?

All GP and Nursing Home microbiology samples will be directed to Enfer.

10. Who pays the courier when it is decided that samples should go direct to Enfer rather than to SVUH lab?

Enfer logistics will be collecting samples a couple of times a day from SVUH, there will be no additional cost to GPs or Nursing Homes.

11. How will results be reported?

The majority of results will be returned via valid Healthlink address. Where needed Enfer will send results through Healthmail or in rare cases where a GP or Nursing Home does not have electronic access, then Enfer will post reports on request.

12. Will Enfer do STI screening and what happens with samples for the NVRL?

An agreed test list has been provided as to which test Enfer will process and this is included in Appendix 1 in the User Manual. STI Requests for the NVRL must be included with all other non-Microbiology samples intended for SVUH.

Examples of additional tests for NVRL which must be packed and sent to SVUH as per current procedures include blood for HIV, hepatitis, syphilis, VZV, measles, mumps and rubella immunity, urines/swabs in Aptima containers for chlamydia/ gonorrhoea, viral swabs for VZV/HSV testing and faecal specimens for norovirus.

13. Will Enfer process Paediatric Microbiology samples?

Yes Enfer will process paediatric microbiology samples

14. What should I do if a microbiology test I require is not on the list?

The routine GP/Nursing Home microbiology test should be captured in the list of tests being sent to Enfer Medical. Please note that tests such as faecal calprotectin and urinary ACR will still be processed by the SVUH Biochemistry department and separate specimen/request forms should be sent for these tests and included with specimens for SVUH.

15. Will Enfer process Mycology samples

Yes, Enfer will process mycology samples (Nail, Hair and Skin)

16. How do you handle abnormal or critical test results?

Enfer Medical has an approved process in place for the reporting of abnormal or critical results and follows the HSE national standards in the reporting of same. Please refer to your GP/Nursing Home Manual for more details.

17. If I have a query and want to speak to someone?

Our Client Service Team are happy to take a call and will triage queries in real-time to the appropriate personnel. Please refer to your GP/Nursing Home Manual for details.

18. Will SVUH Microbiology have access to results in case we need to discuss sensitivity and possible treatment?

Enfer has a team of experienced Consultant Microbiologists who provide a Clinical Advisory Service to discuss results and treatment with a GP or Nursing Home. Please refer to your GP/Nursing Home Manual for details.

19. Will turn around time for results be the same?

In the majority of cases the turnaround time (TAT) will likely be the same, however, please note that TAT is measured from the time of receipt of a sample into the laboratory at Enfer and therefore is very much influenced by the time in which a sample is delivered to SVUH and in turn the time it reaches Enfer.

20. What are the proposed plans for continuity of service in a very rare case should service be unexpectedly disrupted.

Whilst Enfer Medical has implemented policies and procedures to prevent scenarios where service could be unexpectedly disrupted, it has a contingency backup plan in place to ensure continuity of service to GPs, Nursing Homes and their patients. This plan includes the referral of samples to its partner laboratory.

21. How is data treated and protected at Enfer Medical?

Enfer Medical is committed to protecting the [privacy](#) of personal information of its service users and patients. In the course of their work our staff are required to collect and use certain types of information about people, including 'personal data' as defined

by the Data Protection Act 2018. The service user has a responsibility to ensure that this personal data is:

- *Obtained fairly.*
- *Recorded correctly, kept accurate and up to date.*
- *Used and shared both appropriately and legally.*
- *Stored securely.*
- *Not disclosed to unauthorised third parties.*
- *Disposed of appropriately when no longer required.*

All staff working at Enfer Medical are required under the Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure the security and confidentiality of all personal data they process on behalf of service users and patients. Data Protection rights apply whether the personal data is held in electronic format or in a manual or paper-based form. All samples received are treated in the strictest confidence and are anonymised upon receipt into the laboratory.

A signed DPA will be put in place before the commencement of the service.