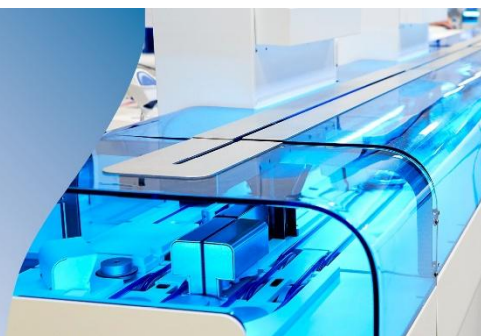




Changes to urine microscopy and culture pathway

Issue: 18 September 2026

To: Clinicians - Southend & Basildon Hospitals

From 1 October 2026, SYNLAB Essex becomes responsible for the pathology services previously provided by both Pathology First and Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust's in-house service. In readiness for the wider harmonisation of pathology services across the area, **the urine microscopy analysers used in South Essex are being upgraded.**

Why are we doing this?

From **5 October**, **Sysmex urine analysers** will be used to screen urine samples before culture testing is performed. This will result in all Urine testing across mid and south Essex being delivered on the latest Sysmex analysers, improving consistency in testing and reporting.

What does it mean for me?

If you are a clinician in south Essex, you may notice some minor changes to comments. The criteria for cultures will be:

- WBC >40 / μ L
- Bacteria >250 / μ L.

Who is exempt?

The following patients will continue to receive urine cultures in all circumstances:

- Pregnant people
- Children under the age of 3
- Immunocompromised patients

Southend and Basildon Hospitals where cultures will always be performed:

- Critical Care

- High Dependency Units
- Colne Ward – BTUH

For more information?

Email serviceupdate.essex@synlab.co.uk **for news and updates. No Patient Identifiable Details please.**

Customer Service: contact 01268 96 8279 / 01268 96 8288 for pathology queries including results, add-ons, sample/ test information and clinical advice. The team is available Monday - Friday 8am - 8pm and on Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays 9am - 5pm.

ICB Intranet: [Mid and south Essex pathology services \(SYNLAB\)](#)