

Departments of Clinical Biochemistry and Haematology

Core Clinical Services Directorate

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Dear Colleagues,

Assay change for Glycated Haemoglobin (HbA1c) at North Bristol NHS Trust

From 27/02/2023, North Bristol NHS Trust will change the analytical method for measurement of HbA1c. RUH and UHBW will move to similar analytical platforms later in 2023.

The units for HbA1c will continue to be reported as mmol/mol. The new analytical method has a minor negative bias compared to the current method performance. This is expected to be in the order of 2-3mmol/mol and therefore not clinically significant. However, if a change is noticed that is not in keeping with changes in diabetic control or the normal variation seen in the patient, note should be taken of whether the sample was analysed at the NBT site or others within the region.

Change in interpretation comments attached to reports

Associated with the change in analytical platform is the ability to detect variants of haemoglobin that could interfere with the measurement of HbA1c. This means that haemoglobin variants may be revealed that would not have been detected previously. In response to such a finding, an interpretative comment will be added to the report stating that if the variant was not known from previous tests to consider contacting the haemoglobinopathy laboratory at NBT by email at nbthaemoglobinopathyservice@nbt.nhs.uk for advice and guidance on further testing.

Where HbA1c is not appropriate to use to screen for or monitor diabetes mellitus, other methods of testing should be utilised as previously available, e.g., fructosamine for monitoring, oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) for diagnosis.

If you are concerned about a discrepant result or the impact of the analytical method in revealing new haemoglobin variants, please contact the Biochemistry or Haematology department.

Best regards,

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