



Guidance for organisations seeking to support the COVID 19 Testing Programme

Department of Health and Social Care

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Annex A – the Francis Crick Institute

The Francis Crick Institute is a biomedical discovery institute dedicated to understanding the fundamental biology underlying health and disease.

At the core of the Crick model is an Operations Team, consisting of the NHS trust virologists (University College London Hospitals), the NHS trust diagnostic laboratory (HSL), clinical scientists working at the both the NHS trust and the Crick, and Crick scientists and leaders. The approach was developed from the outset as a partnership with the Crick considered as an extension of the accredited diagnostic partner laboratory (HSL). All processes have been established at the Crick with close coordination with the NHS trust diagnostic laboratory HSL. The SOPs, and the verification data sets for the pipeline were approved by NHS trust staff and HSL laboratory staff before proceeding. The pipeline was tested in parallel with the NHS diagnostic laboratory for validation. NHS trust staff and HSL staff are part of the clinical diagnostic working group within the operations team and oversee the quality and governance of the pipeline.

The Crick approach is based on five main work-streams, that were developed and tested independently, and are therefore largely standalone. The approach relies on a highly trained research staff to support a semi-automated, but not highly integrated, pathway. The advantage is that the approach is agile and can make use of different lab-space distributed across the building but, particularly with respect to sample reception/handling, requires substantial teams working in shifts. The five steps in the Crick-COVID testing pipeline are shown in the box below:

