The Scottish National Viral Haemorrhagic Fever Test Service (SNVTS) is based at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and offers (from 1 December 2014) Ebola, Marburg, Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever and Lassa Fever testing to NHS Scotland in close collaborative partnership with the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory (RIPL) at Porton Down, Wiltshire (from 2 February 2015, SNVTS will also offer Dengue and Malaria testing). SNVTS operates within 7-day laboratory working hours with on-call capacity for testing of urgent ‘high possibility of VHF’ samples using molecular (real-time PCR) approaches.

**Approach**

In line with UK arrangements, Scottish Doctors attending patients with possible VHF should contact their local Infection Consultant (Infectious Diseases Physician, Consultant Virologist or Consultant Microbiologist) for initial case discussion and advice. If such discussion merits further VHF assessment, the local Infection Consultant should contact the **UK Imported Fever Service (IFS)** on 0844 77 88 99 0 (RIPL Doctor On Call: 07789 031 672).

The **IFS Doctor** will assist with risk assessment (including need for, and urgency of, sample testing and immediate management). If the agreed outcome supports VHF testing of samples, the **IFS Doctor** will approach **SNVTS** by contacting the Duty/On Call Consultant Virologist (SNVTS Consultant On Call) at the **Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh** through 0131 536 1000 (hospital switchboard) who will confirm details with the local Infection Consultant and instruct testing (SNVTS Consultant On Call: 07972 247 666).

Please note that SNVTS will **NOT** accept samples for urgent VHF testing unless such an approach has been agreed in conversation between the local Infection Consultant and IFS. Equally, IFS will advise on a case-by-case basis whether samples may be sent as Category A or B shipments.

Any cases of possible VHF in Scotland should be notified immediately by the local Infection Consultant to the local Health Protection Team who will inform Health Protection Scotland and Scottish Government with a view to consider convening a Problem Assessment Group/Incident Management Team meeting (for Membership and details of approach, please refer to national guidance). Equally, the **local Infection Prevention and Control Service** should be notified immediately.

**Samples**

One 4.5 mL serum separation gel blood tube and two 4.5 mL anti-coagulated EDTA blood tubes should be forwarded for testing at SNVTS alongside a completed SNVTS **test request form**. If possible, a **urine sample** should also be included (but should not delay sample shipment).

Please note that samples to be sent to SNVTS for testing should **NOT** be processed in any manner by the local hospital team/laboratory. Instead, the samples above should be sent intact and unprocessed.
There is no cost incurred to Scottish Health Boards for VHF testing at SNVTS.

Transport

The IFS Doctor will advise whether samples should be sent to SNVTS by Category A or B transport although it is expected that most samples may be sent by the latter (apart from likely cases of ‘high possibility of VHF’ as determined by IFS).

For appropriate packaging of samples, please refer to WHO guidance on the following website:


Sample collection, packaging and transport arrangements (including cost incurred) are the responsibility of each Scottish Health Board that should ensure an agreement is in place already with an approved carrier.

The local hospital team/laboratory should provide SNVTS by telephone with details of the sample shipment (driver identity, vehicle registration, courier organisation, tracking number, contact telephone number and estimated time of arrival at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh).

For Category A transport, please note that it is a Police Scotland requirement to check and record (at place of origin and destination) the identity and courier license of the driver overseeing such shipments. Equally, it is a Police Scotland requirement that such shipments include an inner security seal as well as two outer security seals – one on top and another on bottom of packaging (sealing any access points).

For Scotland, approved Category A couriers include Eagle Couriers (Scotland Ltd) on 0845 123 1230 and Marken on 0131 333 4012.

Please note that hospitals/laboratories that are likely to send specimens for VHF testing should discuss with their local procurement team in advance to agree appropriate arrangements with the courier company they intend to use.

Test Results

The SNVTS Consultant On Call will convey VHF test results to IFS and the local Infection Consultant as soon as they become available (for urgent VHF tests, within 6 hours from receipt at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh) and, whenever possible, a formal test result e-report will be issued at that time to the local infection laboratory.

The local Infection Consultant should inform the local Health Protection Team of the results, who will update Health Protection Scotland and Scottish Government.

In the event of a VHF-positive test result, the local Health Protection Team should lead an Incident Management Team in liaison with Health Protection Scotland and Scottish Government with additional input and support from local and national agencies (including IFS/RIPL and SNVTS) as appropriate. Under such circumstances, the IFS will advise on further case management.

In the event of a VHF-negative test result, the local Infection Consultant should liaise with IFS with a view to review the case and consider other pathogens that may present in a clinical manner similar to VHF.

SNVTS will forward samples received for VHF testing to RIPL for quality assurance and extended testing (if required).

Information for Courier

Once at Little France, Edinburgh, please follow the signs to the South Entrance of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and
drive to **Car Park D**. At the barrier entrance to the car park, please use the intercom to gain entry. Once parked, please proceed to **Laboratory Reception** on level 2 of the Royal Infirmary building. Laboratory Reception is manned at all times and there is a buzzer for gaining the attention of laboratory staff. During the night, the reception grill may be down, but the buzzer is accessible at all times.

Upon arrival of laboratory staff, please hand over the sample parcel showing **ID badge** and **courier license** so that the laboratory may record all such details. Please do **NOT** leave sample parcel unattended at Laboratory Reception.

Once delivered, laboratory staff will place the parcel in the designated area (‘Virology Bench’) for the attention of the Duty/On Call Biomedical Scientist in Virology.

**Useful web links**

Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens VHF guidance:


Health Protection Scotland VHF guidance:


Institute of Biomedical Science VHF guidance:

https://www.ibms.org/estudents/go/news,728

Public Health England VHF guidance:


**Brief Overview of the Initial Steps of Approach**

**Attending Doctor** risk assesses case of possible VHF with **local Infection Consultant** (Infectious Diseases Physician, Consultant Virologist or Consultant Microbiologist)

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**If considered risk of possible VHF,**

**local Infection Consultant** informs **local Health Protection Team** and **local Infection Prevention & Control Team** and liaises with the **UK Imported Fever Service (IFS)** on 08 44 77 88 99 0

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**If agreed risk of possible VHF,**

**IFS** liaises with **Duty/On Call Consultant Virologist (SNVTS Consultant On Call)** at the **Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh** on 0131 536 1000 (or 07972 247 666) who will confirm details and instruct testing.