

## **Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB\_479\_21**

### **You asked:**

I want to know how I can obtain confirmation that my covid swab was destroyed. I would like details of how swab data is kept and the format, also confirmation that full data protection is followed

### **Our response:**

The Health Boards Pathology Department has a Control of Clinical Material Policy for staff to follow; swab samples are kept in the laboratory for 1 week short term storage. Any positive samples are sent to the University Hospital of Wales (UHW) for variant testing, negative samples are kept frozen in the department for 3 months in the event that further testing may be required. Storage is secure and can only be accessed by Virology staff, and after the required storage time samples are autoclaved (heat sterilisation) and immediately disposed of.

All results are permanently stored on the Pathology Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), from here they are transmitted to several results databases where they can be accessed by clinicians, infection prevention and control nurses and contact tracers (for test trace and protect). When results are accessed, the patient's demographic details and requesting location/clinician can be seen, other information such as the time and date the sample was taken and clinical details are also included.

All of these systems are password protected and can only be accessed by authorised personnel; a full audit trail of who has viewed results is available on all systems. In addition, all Pathology staff adhere to Health Board information Governance policies and the importance of patient confidentiality is also included in training documentation. This is applied to ALL Pathology results generated, not just for Covid results.