

Backlogs



Client Handbook

Backlogs

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1. About Backlogs

Backlogs Limited is a pathology reporting service for histopathology and cytopathology that helps hospitals clear any ‘backlogs’ of unreported cases. Backlogs helps hospitals deal with capacity shortages (e.g., when a pathologist is sick or on annual leave, or while recruiting a new pathologist) as well as with periodic variations in workload. By harnessing a national network of over 100 specialist consultant pathologists based around the country, Backlogs is now acknowledged by many NHS Trusts as the preferred alternative to agency locum services.

Backlogs has reported over one million cases for more than 100 NHS hospitals. It pioneered online pathology reporting technology in 2005, and has demonstrated its major advantages in cost, speed and efficiency over alternative services.

Backlogs accepts mainly glass microscope slides, and will be moving to digital pathology in 2024. Paraffin blocks may also be accepted upon request. Thanks to its large network of reporting pathologists, Backlogs can offer comprehensive coverage across all clinical sub-specialities.

As soon as one of our specialist pathologists uploads their findings through our secure online reporting system, the sending laboratory can log in online to view the results. Backlogs’ secure web based systems are designed to a high specification, offering proven functionality within the NHS environment. These systems are continuously being updated to meet the changing demands within the NHS.

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2. Contact details

Telephone	01480 498 250
Out of hours emergencies	07935 502 376
Email	support@backlogs.co.uk
Website	https://www.hcahealthcare.co.uk/backlogs
Post	Backlogs Limited, Silvaco Technology Centre, Compass Point, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 5JL

3. Hours of service

9am – 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)

4. Backlogs Scope

Backlogs works with a wide range of both specialist and generalist pathologists all of whom undertake EQA in their reporting specialisms. The majority of the Consultants are the specialism lead in their own NHS Trust. As such Backlogs are able to report the majority of case types as indicated below:

Gastrointestinal Pathology	Dermatopathology
Gynaecology Including Colposcopy	Head and Neck including Endocrine
Bone and soft tissue	Breast
Hepatobiliary	Urology
Respiratory	Haematopathology
Diagnostic cytopathology (Non-gynaecological)	Placenta / Products of Conception

Other case types may be able to be reported upon request.

Backlogs is also able to provide support for MDTs if required

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5. Sending samples

Sending microscope slides:

Collections can be organised on a regular or ad-hoc basis as required. Backlogs uses a secure courier with tracking capabilities. All packaging materials are provided by Backlogs.

Organising a courier:

To organise a collection, email support@backlogs.co.uk or call 01480 498 250, the courier will be booked for the following day and will arrive between 9am and 4.30pm.

Backlogs generally uses E-courier/Parcelforce services for transport of microscope slides but also works with other providers as required.

Backlogs sends packaging material in advance. Please give us at least **one day** notice if you need more packaging material to be sent.

Collection is free for 20 or more cases, unless agreed by exception with a member of the management team

Backlogs require a list of the case numbers being sent with each delivery in order to comply with UKAS requirements that all sent cases can be identified. The list should be emailed to support@backlogs.co.uk once all the cases have been packed.

Packing instructions for nine-slide trays for the Courier (glass slides only):

- Our specially designed Backlogs transport boxes carry nine-slide trays. Arrange slides in full trays of nine where possible to avoid partially-filled slide trays. Backlogs will sort cases into separate slide trays on receipt.
- Place an empty tray at the bottom of the stack and two empty trays upside down on the top.
- Secure the stack with elastic bands: one at each end and another across the length.
- Wrap the stack in bubble wrap and secure tightly under the strings in the transport box.
- Place all paperwork in the slot at the back of the box but do not overfill. Paperwork which does not fit in the slot should be placed in a separate envelope which can then be put inside the transport bag.
- Close the box and secure the fixings.
- Place a cable tie around the short side of the box and under the handle, then secure.
- Seal inside the transport bag. The bag will fit up to two boxes of cases.
- Affix the courier label as provided by the team from Backlogs

Backlogs will send bubble wrap and a new cable tie in the transport boxes.

Packaging instructions for twenty-slide trays for the Courier (glass slides only):

- Our specially designed Backlogs Large transport boxes carry twenty-slide trays. Fill slide trays with slides leaving no gaps (Backlogs will sort into separate cases on receipt).
- Secure the stack of slide trays with elastic bands, one at each end and one securing each flap lengthways.
- Wrap the stack in bubble wrap then place paperwork on top of stack before securing tightly under the white strings in the transport box

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- Paperwork which does not fit in the box should be placed in a separate envelope which can then be put inside the same transport bag.
- Close the box and secure with elastic bands on each end and one horizontally in the centre and a cable tie through the small hole.
- Seal inside the transport bag.
- Fix the courier label as provided by the team at Backlogs

Backlogs will send bubble wrap, cable tie and elastic bands in the transport boxes.

6. Return of cases

Slides are collected from the pathologists by overnight courier as soon as possible after reporting and returned to Backlogs, where all slides and paperwork are checked and any discrepancies addressed. Slides and paperwork are returned to the hospitals either the same day or the next day.

Backlogs aims to return slides and paperwork within 7 days of reporting.

Where an alert is raised to refer a case to MDT, these slides will be separated and returned to the sending hospital urgently.

7. Sample request forms and criteria for sample acceptance

It is essential that every sample be accompanied by a sample request form or LIMS printout including as a minimum, the following three points of identity:

- Patient forename and surname
- Patient date of birth
- Laboratory accession number

Sample request forms can be in the sending laboratory's template, and can be typed or handwritten.

The information provided must match between the sample/slide and the request form or LIMS printout. Any discrepancies will be highlighted to the sending laboratory and, where the discrepancy cannot be resolved, the sample and request form will be returned to the sender for resolution prior to any further processing. All samples, apart from small biopsies, require a macroscopic description to be included to aid the pathologist when reporting the slides.

8. Urgent samples

Urgent samples can be accommodated providing that the request form is clearly marked as urgent. These samples will be given priority attention by the Backlogs admin team and the reporting pathologist will make every effort to prioritise the reporting of these cases.

If a case becomes urgent after being sent to Backlogs, the sending hospital should contact Backlogs' admin team (support@backlogs.co.uk or 01480 498 250) and the admin team will expedite the case.

When an urgent case is reported an email alert will be sent directly from the reporting platform to the address(s) supplied.

9. Requests for extra work e.g., levels, stains or IHC

Pre-stained slides:

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If pre-stained slides were sent to Backlogs for reporting, when a pathologist requires extra work, an email is automatically generated and sent to the sending hospital laboratory's identified point(s) of contact. Additional slides should be packaged and sent to Backlogs as soon as possible.

If the sending hospital is unable to carry out the further work (e.g., for unusual immunos), the hospital should get in touch with Backlogs.

For requests for molecular tests or genetic testing, Backlogs can support these being carried out and will charge these at cost to the sending hospital.

10. Turnaround times

See Service Level Agreement with your Trust for specific arrangements. For general routine cases, Backlogs aims to report 90% within 4 days of receipt.

11. First time user set-up

For new hospital users, our National Accounts Manager will take you through the process and information requirements and will also work with you to produce a Service Level Agreement either directly with Backlogs or through Health Trust Europe on the framework. We aim to provide a service that works for you. Backlogs will be moving to a new reporting platform in 2024 which will allow full integration with hospital LIMS to remove the need to copy and paste reports. In the meantime, our National Accounts Manager will provide full training on how to access reports on the current platform.

New user forms will need to be completed for all staff requiring access to the reporting platform. Upon completion users will be sent a username, password and memorable word for log in with two factor authentication.

12. Accessing reports online

Results are available to be accessed via our secure online portal facility (<https://www.backlogs.co.uk/>) immediately upon clinical authorisation by the reporting pathologist.

Clients receive a list three times per day (9am, noon, 3pm) identifying any new cases that have been reported and not accessed since the last list was generated. Clients can, at any time, log in to the Chameleon web portal to access a single (paginated) PDF of all reports generated since the last download. Alternatively, clients can copy/paste the reference number or list of reference numbers from the notification email into the Chameleon system to access a PDF copy of an authorised report.

Once reports are extracted, the PDF contents can be printed off or copied/pasted directly into the department's LIMS. Extracted reports are marked as 'seen' on the system and can then be hidden on the list of cases on the home screen. This enables users to easily identify newly reported cases.

The report provides the contact details of the reporting pathologist so requests for any clinical advice and/or suggestions regarding further investigations and procedures can be made direct.

Contact the Backlogs Admin team for forgotten passwords or problems logging in to the portal (support@backlogs.co.uk or 01480 498 250).

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13. Types of investigation offered by Backlogs

Backlogs will accept the following sample types:

Histology:

- Stained slides
- Unstained slides – only where the test requested by the Backlogs pathologist is outside of the sending laboratory repertoire. Backlogs sends all unstained slides to HSL Advanced Diagnostics – please see section 18 – Referral Laboratories for further details. Backlogs may cross charge these at cost depending on the test requested.

Non-gynaecological cytology:

- PAP/Giemsa/H&E stained slides
- Special stains and immunocytochemistry completed by the sending hospital.

14. Molecular testing

Backlogs can offer molecular testing through Sarah Cannon Molecular Diagnostics. This will incur an additional fee. For further details contact support@backlogs.co.uk (for the attention of the Managing Director).

15. Backlogs' reporting pathologists

Backlogs requires every reporting pathologist to

- Be on the UK GMC Specialist Register for Histopathology / Cellular Pathology
- Carry out ongoing CPD through the Royal College of Pathology or an equivalent body
- Be a member of a UK Medical defence organisation
- Participate in relevant EQA scheme(s)
- Be registered with the Information Commissioners Office

Backlogs prefers pathologists to be tenured to an NHS Trust but under certain circumstances may work with untenured pathologists providing they have annual appraisals to the NHS standard requirements. Backlogs collects evidence of each of these requirements for every pathologist at least once a year. Pathologists are required to notify Backlogs immediately if they are subject to poor performance investigation from EQA schemes or from their own NHS hospital.

In addition, Backlogs carries out a regular programme of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) on every pathologist.

16. Governance

Backlogs is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and is fully accredited to UKAS ISO 15189 (2012) under reference number 21408. Backlogs' Quality Management System underpins the company's aim of providing a responsive and flexible system that supports its clients in the delivery of their clinical service. Please contact Backlogs (support@backlogs.co.uk for the attention of the Operations Manager) if you would like more details on our quality policies.

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17. Privacy policy and Information Governance

Backlogs takes patient privacy very seriously and complies with all appropriate legislation in respect of data, information and data security. It also has a duty to comply with guidance issued by the Department of Health, the Information Commissioner, by other advisory groups, and by professional bodies.

Backlogs is governed by its Information Governance Policy which sets out how the organisation will meet its legal obligations and NHS Information Governance (NHSIG) requirements concerning confidentiality and information security standards. All staff complete mandatory Information Governance training annually.

To access the NHSIG toolkit for Backlogs please use the below link:

<https://www.dsptoolkit.nhs.uk/OrganisationSearch/NW6>

Should you wish to discuss the details of our policy or to query the use of specific personal information please email support@backlogs.co.uk (for the attention of the Operations Manager) or call us on 01480 498 250.

18. Case reviews

Backlogs can offer a full case review service according to RCpath case review guidelines. Please contact us on support@backlogs.co.uk (for the attention of the Operations Manager) or call us on 01480 498 250 to discuss your requirements

19. Referral centres

For pre-stained slides sent to Backlogs, any additional work (e.g., levels, special stains or immunohistochemistry) requested by the reporting pathologist is generally carried out by the originating laboratory. If this is not possible, then we refer to Health Services Laboratories – Advanced Diagnostics. Please see website for available tests at <http://www.hsl-ad.com/>

(UKAS reference 9007)

HSL Advanced Diagnostics
Ground Floor
60 Whitfield Street
London
W1T 4EU

20. Complaints procedure

We take any complaints very seriously. All formal complaints are logged as CAPA's and are managed through Q-Pulse. As part of the company's Quality Management System (QMS), we develop suitable corrective actions in response to all complaints and, where appropriate, use these as opportunities for staff training and development.

Should you wish to raise an issue or find out more about our complaints policy, please contact us on 01480 498 250 or support@backlogs.co.uk (for the attention of the Quality Manager).