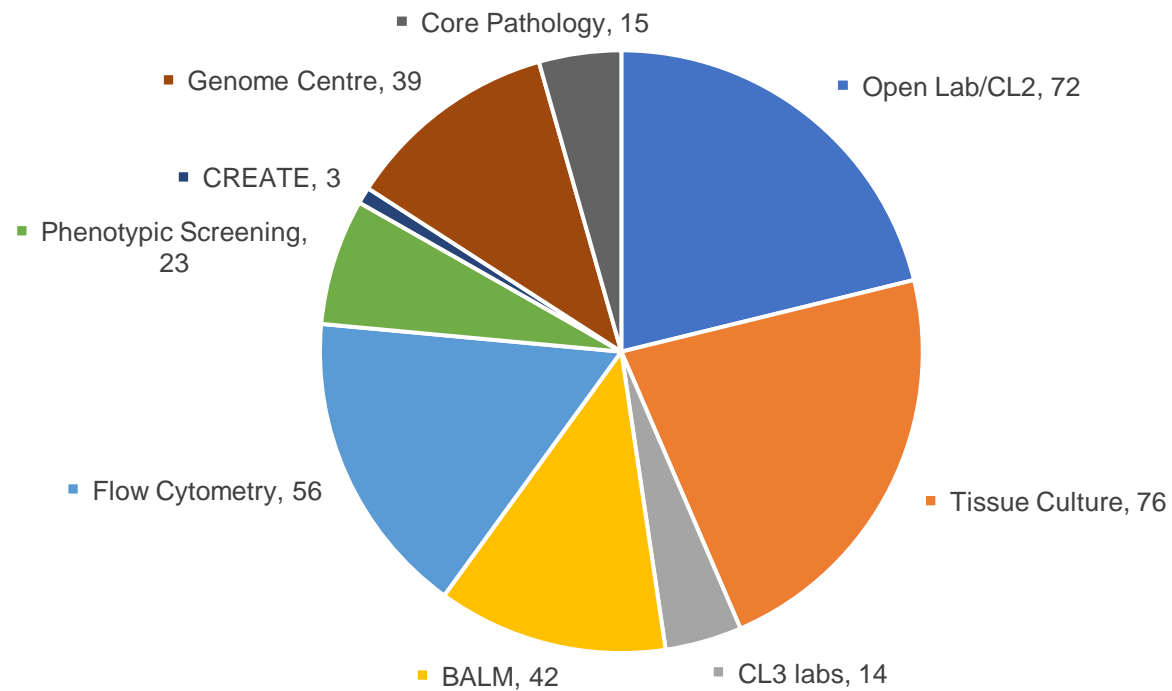
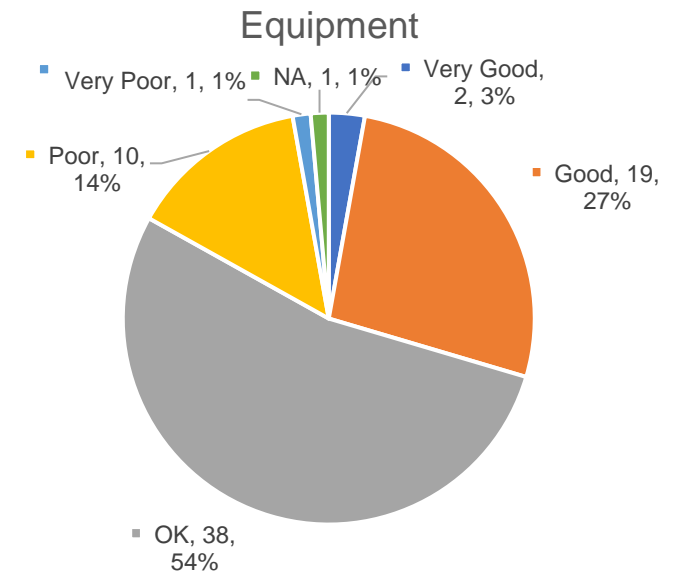
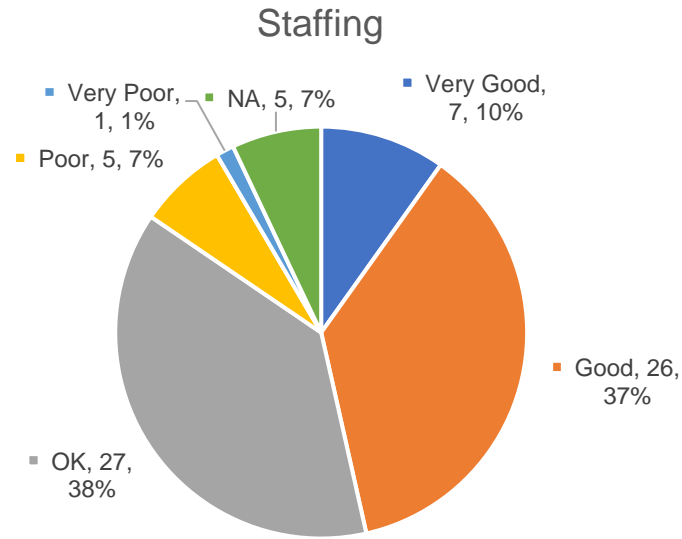
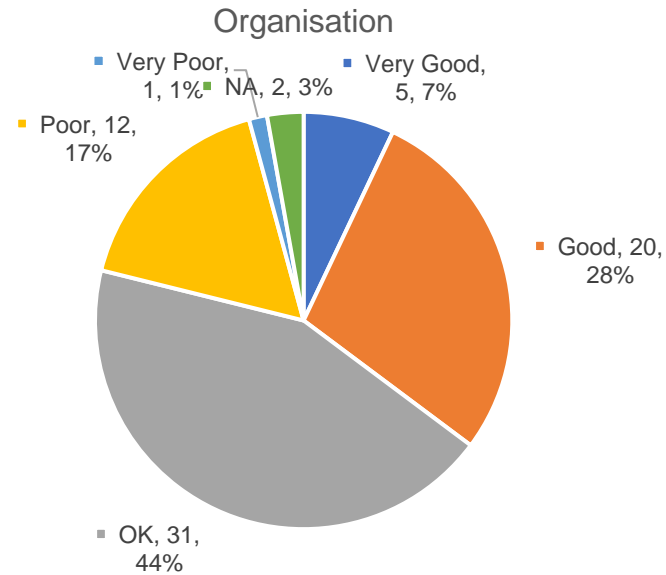


Blizard Laboratory and Core Facility Survey 2023

Response rate: 100 users (total staff numbers Feb23 = 360)



Open/CL2 Labs



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

- Not enough storage
- Housekeeping needs improvement eg regular cleaning schedule
- Cluttered/unused benches
- Broken equipment – a list of equipment and maintenance responsibility would be useful

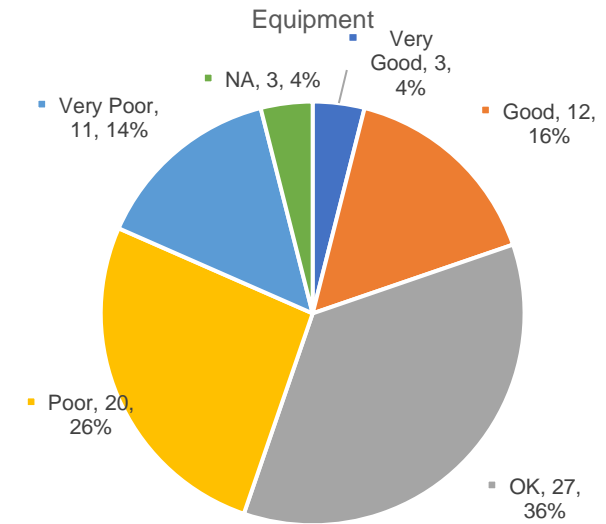
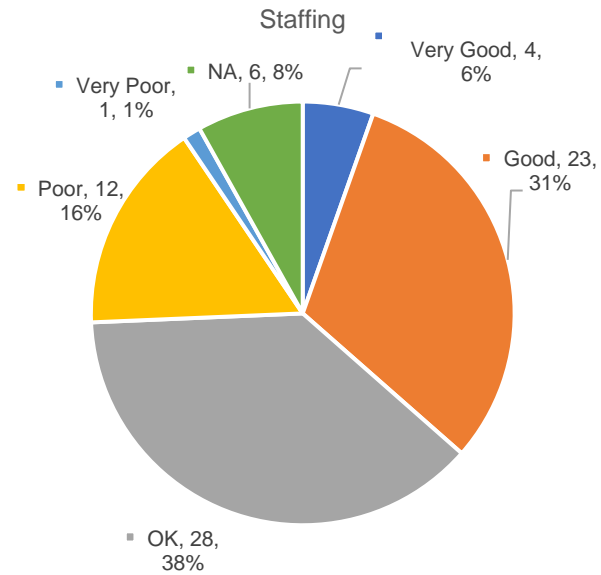
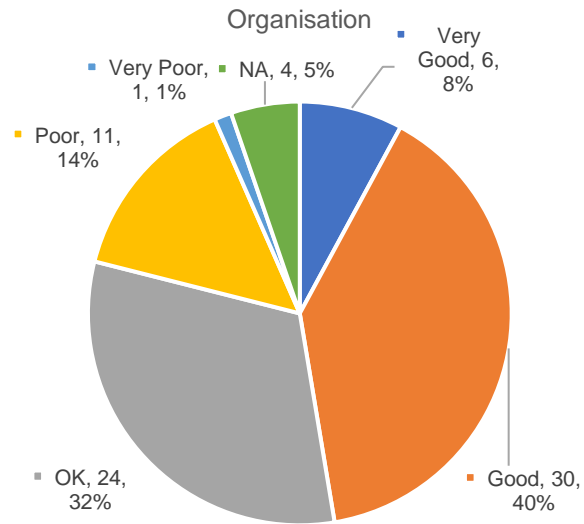
Free Text Comments

- There are some benches that are underused or are kept by people who historically had them but now have a smaller group.
- Communal equipment need attention, repairs should be performed asap, need staff on site to help, old equipment to be replaced with new, more PCR machines, Chemi-Doc, 37°C shakers and efficient cold rooms.
- I didn't really know how to answer the staffing question because there are no specific staff dedicated to specific labs. I would suggest that a member of the lab management is a dedicated point of contact for each lab area with responsibility for the upkeep and the labs.
- The Biosafety cabinets at TC9 were supposed to be replaced but no updates had been given yet.
- There's a need for more qPCR machines, they're in almost constant use and can be difficult to get access to at times. It's often difficult to find members of lab management quickly.
- When equipment breaks down it takes months for it to be sorted out. We should receive email correspondence to say equipment has broken down and estimates for when it will be repaired. It would be good to have a lab cleaner to clean the lab sinks, communal areas and throw away communal bins as no one is responsible for this which makes the institute look unkempt. It would be good to have a facility which provides us with sterile LB broth, TBS etc. More sinks in the open lab would be good. The cold rooms are a pain. When they breakdown it makes it very difficult to find our reagents which we store in the cold room as everything is packed into the room very haphazardly. It would be good to receive email correspondence with updates on the situation and when things will be repaired. More duran bottles etc. could be put out in the communal areas, sometimes there are only 500 mL bottles available. Chairs with wheels would also make lab work so much easier and efficient.
- I would like the shelf full of random stuff from the previous user removed, so that I can use the space as it is hard at the moment with limited storage areas.
- Need update and more tissue culture facilities.
- Clearing of unused laboratory spaces, increasing storage space where possible, preventing traffic through CL2 labs unless necessary (e.g. removing the PBS and distilled water from the CL2 lab to the mushroom area is a good idea), wider range of labcoat sizes available, clearer information regarding waste streams and zip tie colour tagging.
- Generally, in all labs: 1. There is incredibly limited storage facilities, draws and cupboards. As a result the labs look shambolic even after they have been cleaned and tidied and is hard to organise. 2. We should be improving our waste and recycling. Packaging for individual stripettes and plasticware goes in the clinical waste bin when it should go in general refuse or ideally be recycled. I understand this was because people accidentally put clinical waste in non-clinical waste bins but I think there could be ways to prevent this from happening that was never investigated- e.g. have non-clinical waste bins positioned in each lab but away from clinical waste bins, have a lid labelled clearly (they were just open bins before). We should be looking to eliminate all single use plastic as I expect this will be a requirement of grant funding in the not too distant future. QMUL could be much more conscious of the environment, which would make me feel happier to work there.
- Up-to-date inventory of all equipment, both centrally-owned and group-owned, so that lab users know if a particular piece of equipment is available in the building and how to use it (if possible).
- A new 384-well qPCR machine and Bioanalyzer would be appreciated. They are both heavily used but at the very end of their life, and have thus far relied on investments from individual labs.
- Lack of appropriate storage space/work space, particularly in rooms where more than 4 groups are operating at high capacity everyday. This may be difficult to implement but many groups are doing mostly clinical work and their benches go unused almost year round, maybe it would make sense that such groups can share smaller spaces/fewer benches since they are rarely ever seen to be working at the same time.

- There are several pieces of common equipment that are out of use with no clear time frame as to when they will be functional. For example, the BioRad chemidoc next to PCR area in the open lab has been out of use for several months; there is a sign warning not to use it, but there has been no email communication regarding the fact that it is not working, and no information as to when it may be fixed. This type of equipment is heavily used for molecular and protein work across the Institute. Moreover, this means that the second BioRad chemidoc in LG23 is used a lot more with users often having to queue for the equipment and ineffective use of the booking system. If issues with equipment are not dealt with or communicated efficiently it encourages a culture of apathy where users will not report problems, thereby perpetuating the problem of equipment being non-functional and issues not being addressed.
- Please fix the roof
- Repair of broken equipment in timely manner, removal of inadequate equipment
- we use the TC in the Blizzard for virus work, the facility is often dirty, fridges are full of old solutions/media, cells are left in incubators without being taken care of. It would be advantageous if a named lab manager would be in charge of the facility and ensure people follow rules when working there
- When new starters join, provide a list of how you book equipment, using which booking platforms for which instruments, and where to order reagents from (for example, different system and logs for ethanol and methanol compared to other reagents). Better logs of who owns what equipment and whether or not other lab groups can use them (scope of sharing of existing assets).
- Improve the waste disposal and have a shared space where alcohols or other reagents can be discarded. Remove broken equipment (some have been there for more than 2 years). A lot of bench space is occupied by the stuff of groups that no longer work here.
- Better and more storage solutions would be very welcome. Currently, there is inadequate storage space.
- More pH probes, more balances, and centrifuges for plates!! or centrifuges in general
- Stay on top of space allocation, clear unused equipment, and replace non-functional equipment (when required).
- Not enough storage space for consumables.
- People don't really take care of the instruments and often they are left in a bad condition
- Organization and decluttering needed
- There needs to be re-organisation of all benches/cupboards.
- At times there is no water flow through the water knobs or no access to hot water (which can be essential for cleaning lab equipment).
- I think it would be good to continue renewing key equipment, such as qPCR machines and the cryostats. Yes they all work and are serviced but they start to show their years.
- There are no general use stocks of basic items, e.g. pipette tips, falcons, everything is ordered individually - this is time consuming and creates unnecessary waste as much gets unused as it is left over from people who are no longer at the Blizzard.
- new water dispenser not working (lg23), bins overflowing (within shared areas) leftover dirty bottles and cylinders left middle of shelves
- The main issue in these areas, especially where communal equipment is located such as balances, pH metres and fume hoods, is the build up of mess and clutter e.g. spillages around the balances, items left in fume hoods limiting space for the next user or washing up left around the sink areas. Not sure how to get people to clear up after themselves.

- We very urgently need to improve our equipment - what we have and the maintenance. For example - we need additional PCR machines, the Chemidoc machines and other equipment are often broken, the hot and cold rooms are often unable to be used - and the shaker therefore cannot be used. We are too often wandering around the labs looking for something that works. 2. The repairs to the building need to be expedited as a matter of priority. It is simply not acceptable that we should have repeated flooding in the corridors and tissue culture facilities over such a long time, and this is also a slipping hazard. We cannot upgrade our TC equipment because it is dependent on getting the leaks fixed, but we are still waiting for this to be done. It is difficult to understand how our leadership does not see how serious these fundamental issues are for our productivity and reputation.
- NO
- generally cleanliness of shared spaces needs to be improved - examples: there is always waste/tips/tissues by the BioRad Gel Doc and all around the gel running area near that. Similar for near the human cryostat area. Storage space in general could be improved. EVERYTHING should be labelled with a PI name to make it clear what belongs to who (and if groups have left that it can be discarded)
- Lack of storage areas. Need to establish better organisation of shared areas/equipment. Some are not looked after properly: no proper cleaning after use, unlabeled/mislabeled reagents in fumes hoods, equipment out of order not being notified...
- IT would help if multi user pieces of equipment could be repaired in a more timely fashion.
- The current space use doesn't necessary reflect use, meaning some bays are empty and some are crowded
- Lots of space in the open labs are cluttered with repetitive consumables storage. Availability of a stores on site could prevent the requirement to buy and store large quantities of common consumables. Many cupboards are occupied with very old consumables which is not claimed by anyone. A central allocation of cupboard space by lab management will be useful. Common instruments infrastructure could be improved. For example, instruments including plate readers, fluorescence microscope, could available on clustermarket
- Issues with equipment could often be better communicated. It tends to happen that specific PCR machines or blocks in a machine are not working, but there is no note of the machine making users aware of this.
- The GM room (LG09) would benefit from an upgrade notably with the hoods that are old. The floor is often dirty and the room needs to be more tidy. There should be a rota for the cleaning of that room or perhaps a cleaning company could come periodically to clean the floor. Also, it would be great to have a dedicated room for work with replicative viruses BSL2 with individual hoods that could be dedicated for specific group of viruses. Currently, there are rooms for work with BSL3 viruses but no TC room dedicated for BSL2 (CAT2) replicative viruses.

Tissue Culture



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

- Old, broken equipment needs replacing – delays with the TC refurb project
- Replacement of distel
- Lack of microscopes (“Basic equipment (microscopes, water baths, centrifuges) varies immensely between rooms is not centrally supported”)
- Regular deep cleaning
- Lack of storage

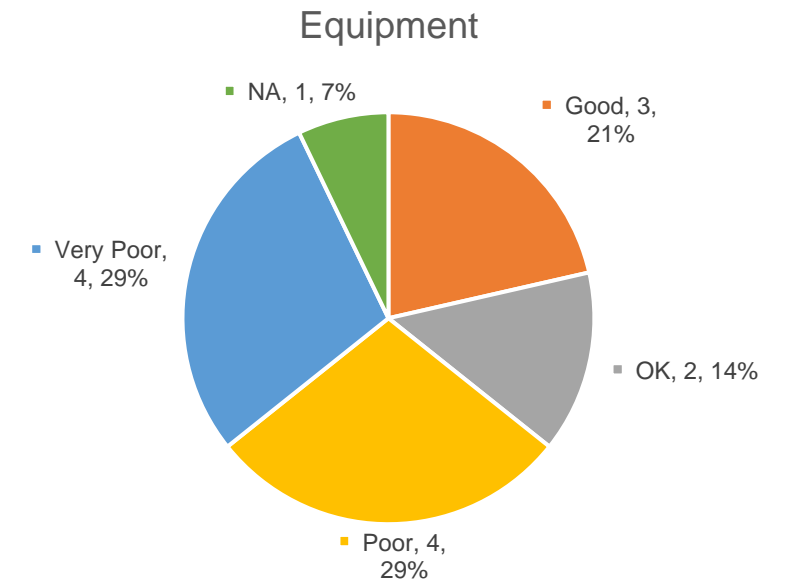
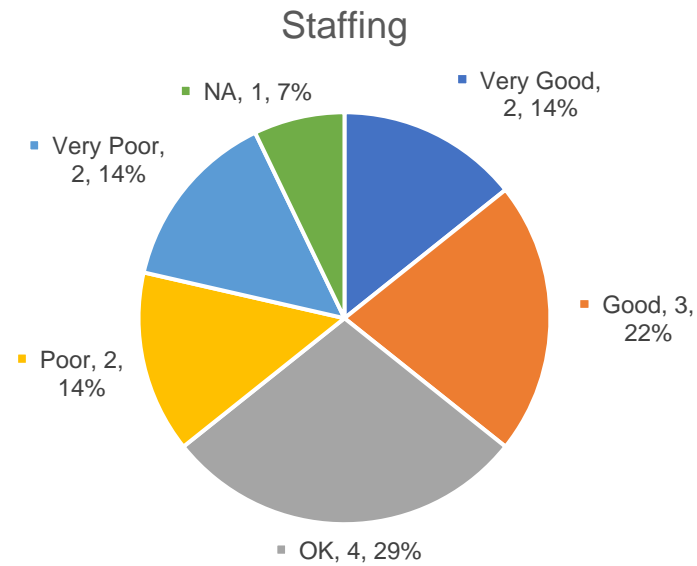
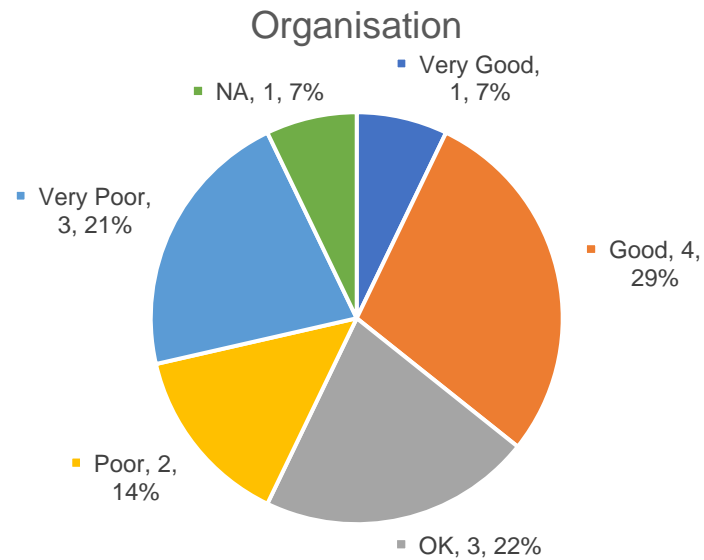
Free Text Comments

- Lots of old hoods, we are promised upgrades but these never seem to come. Storage facilities are old and battered cupboards, microscopes etc need replacing (TC12, dentistry)
- All good apart from the sewage leak business which was a disaster.
- At least 1 hood and 1 incubator in our lab (LG167) out of action/frequently unreliable- has been the case for months and not sure what's being done to resolve it.
- Roof needs to be repaired, equipment should be shared fairly amongst groups, TC floors need cleaning every month.
- I suggest that a member of the lab management is a dedicated point of contact for each lab area with responsibility for their upkeep including cleaning. In TC8 for example has been a dumping ground for old microscopes for many years. Currently one very old microscope is functional and it on its last legs.
- Incubators are quite old and faulty. Hoods often have issues with control panels/damaged parts.
- Seeing as distel has been found to be a mutagen, I think it would be good for a non-mutagenic cleaning alternative to be used instead. The floors of TC haven't been cleaned in a long time. TC hoods need updating. The hoods in our TC suite have holes which means when we spill media it is a real hassle to clean the media spills. Perhaps replace with hoods that don't holes.
- It all seems quite dated - the chairs are particularly uncomfortable
- The planned refurbishment has been on hold for along time. The re-furbishment should occur ASAP
- I think we have some of the best TC facilities. We are really lucky. There are occasional issues with space vs demand and need for repair but on the whole, it's pretty good. Obviously the roof leaks are catastrophic but I understand that there is ongoing work to fix this.
- investment for tissue culture equipment: microscopes with cameras that work as a start. I know this is departmental investment, but we could consider a joint Blizzard/loD bid to the University to upgrade some of the equipment.
- Cleaning Equipment for each hood
- Basic equipment maintenance / replacement schemes need improvement.
- The cell culture room (LG10) lacks essential equipment, such as a functional water bath and aspirators. The hoods constantly fail, and the incubators require an upgrade. There is a hole in the ceiling due to leaks.
- Continuous leaks/electrical problems are a major issue, but this is of course a larger issue with the building
- Basic equipment yet we are being told that the users are responsible for the maintenance or replacement of equipment. So how to fairly determine which user should pay for the repairs? It is my opinion that the maintenance of these things sh(microscopes, water baths, centrifuges) varies immensely between rooms is not centrally supported. This should be core equipment. Whilst I appreciate that self-organisation of each room is the only practical way to manage them, this requires some level of overview (say, occasional inspections) by lab management to ensure the upkeep of the rooms. Otherwise they get disorganised and dirty, and not fit for purpose. Allocation of new groups to TC rooms is also tricky. Groups are very protective of their space and frequently resist new labs. Lab and/or institute management should have authority to enforce the allocation of new labs to a given TC space.

- equipment is severely outdated and fails regularly (i.e. Co2 incubators) and basic needs of a tissue culture lab are not being repaired when reported (i.e. microscopes/water baths/vacuum pumps). TC suites are shared facilities and could be centralised as it is unfair to bring the cost of shared equipment onto specific groups. Maybe a common pot of money can be created in each centre and users (PI/centre leads) can decide what is most needed
- TC update is awaited. Incubators are old and failing, and so are safety cabinets. Organisation by work rather than groups would be better, so iPCs don't need to be mixed with clinical and primary mouse samples.
- There have been reluctance to get issues with hoods etc. looked at due to the tissue culture suites upgrade, however there is currently no tangible timetable for this to occur within. Lack of access to facilities in tissue culture can cause huge disruption in users work, particularly when tissue culture forms the basis of experimental models for data generation, moreover some of these require months of work. During peak periods, TC hoods can be used for >8 hours per day by a single lab group. There could be a greater compromise in allowing cost for engineer call out for examination and simple fixes; thereby allowing work to proceed more efficiently rather than months or potentially years of disruption in waiting for the upgrade. The suggestion that users should use other tissue culture suites temporarily, for example when hoods are being serviced is not practical. Many groups are implementing testing for mycoplasma and attempting to reduce the chance of contamination ruining their work. Short term moving between TC rooms and hoods could jeopardise this and is impractical (aside from GM lab work where there is no other option). As aforementioned, better communication about tissue culture issues and an insight into the future timescale for the TC suite upgrades would be beneficial for all users.
- TC is fine, roof outside leaks (TC3) (and inside sometimes)
- Some of the equipment (TC hoods, incubators etc.) is quite old and needs to be replaced. Also the ceiling leaks whenever it rains.
- Regular deep cleaning of the floors, dedicated centre leads to organise and monitor cleaning rota
- Abernathy ice machine has been out of order for a while. It would be great if that can be fixed/sorted as well as abernathy's nano pure water dispenser
- Broken equipment such as a centrifuge and a hood which cannot be fixed. There have been there for more than a year occupying space.
- In LG170 we only have one working centrifuge, which is problematic when people are processing blood and results in queues and delays in sample processing. One of the hoods is also broken which means sometimes people have to share even although they are working with different samples/cell lines/tissue.
- Better and more storage solutions would be very welcome. Currently, there is inadequate storage space.
- Lack of proper training, many times equipment is left turned on overnight and many other things that should be good common good practices are often not followed.
- Hopefully, the TCR refurbishment will solve many of the current over-crowding and poor equipment problems.
- virus room needs to be organised and cleaned
- LG9 of Blizzard Building: the inverted microscope is very old, and some parts were broken. The attached microcomputer is hard to use (cannot name the images taken). Only one vacuum pump works.
- Leaks from ceiling in corridor outside TC3 need to be fixed.
- We need new hoods and incubators as 3 out of 6 are not working

- Need all the incubators and hoods in running condition
- The ratio of ex vivo to mycoplasma free culture hoods it's not the best and it can limit the availability of spaces where you can conduct your own work
- Looking to seeing the new incubators and hoods installed. The tissue culture microscopes could benefit from an upgrade (TC5 and 6). It would be good to have more microscopes equipped with a camera to take pictures.
- We don't have basic working equipment for cell culture in LG.10 - the microscope is broken, the water bath is broken, one of the incubators is constantly breaking down whilst the other has a faulty door, and everything is filthy. There is also a ton of stuff I never see anyone use but it is taking up all the storage space so that we now have boxes piled so high you can scarce get to the light switch or the other day boxes had just been left on the floor by the centre table creating a trip hazard.
- We have a hood that is frequently breaking and an incubator that doesn't work. Storage space for TC items is limited so every available space is taken up by boxes (an overall problem).
- The new equipment will help greatly, as equipment failure is one of the biggest issues. TC rooms are currently managed by the individual teams that use them which seems to work well for the rooms I use, although less well in the GM lab (LG09?), but I haven't used this lab for a while so I don't know what the current situation is.
- We need additional TC microscopes and upgrades to some of our hoods and incubators
- The hoods are incubators are getting old (and developing more frequent faults) and it takes a long time when we report issues for them to be dealt with/repared. The TC room we use is very busy - and there is no capacity for things to break down. We work really hard to keep different cell types separate to avoid possible cross-contaminations. Some of us do very long term culture experiments (90days+) so this is really important. The TC room floors need to be cleaned or at least swept/hovered on a more regular basis - at the moment this only happens if we specifically request it
- Floors are not regularly cleaned (dusty), it is needed to be implemented regular cleaning. Rooms are sometimes very crowded (too many groups working in a same space). TC equipment is getting old. Would be helpful having an automatic cell counter on each TC lab.
- The TC has frequent problems with flooding etc, and there are clear issues with end of life of the hoods, but they are good spaces
- The equipment are too old and always failing to function properly. There is no structure in the organization and as a result the TC is always dirty
- Groups that work with similar material should be set up together. A minimum infrastructural support including, TC hoods, incubators, inverted microscopes, centrifuge, vacuum aspirators and cell counters must be provided in all TC rooms.
- The tissue culture facilities I use seem to be largely self-managed by users or Centres.
- One more microscope and a UV lamp would be good in TC9 as there are so many users if possible. Incubators need to be serviced and replaced if needed as we have lost cells in incubators due to fluctuating CO2 levels. The hoods need to have UV bulbs replaced /added as we have had problems with contamination and all hoods need regular servicing thanks.
- The TC room TC9 only has one small light microscope to look at cells, count them. The room is shared with 4 labs and many users mentioned that a fluorescence microscope would be greatly beneficial as currently users need to transport their cells in other rooms to visualise the fluorescence in their cells. It seems that other TC rooms in the Blizard are fully equipped with various microscopes and even camera to visualise their cells on a screen, whereas TC9 (despite again being used by at least 4 labs) has only one small light microscope. We also have regular issues with CO2 level in our incubators. One incubator in particular had its CO2 level dropping on several occasions, which ruined the ongoing experiments.

CL3 Laboratories



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

- Outdated, broken equipment requires repair/replacement
- Cleaning

Free Text Comments

The hoods in these labs are well out of date and most have already broken down permanently with no obvious plans to replace. The CL3 labs are shut down twice a year which cuts out about 2 months of the year to do research. previously these closures were about 2-3 days and only one CL3 lab was shut down at a time. We need to organise this better. There is no system in place for new staff to get proper work experience directly yet this is a requisite to be allowed to work in the labs.

This room is so dirty and organised, someone needs to be given responsibility of regularly cleaning it. I don't think there should be aspirators in the room as the media in the bottles are often left there for weeks on end. Moreover I don't think sharps bins should be kept in the hood as it's a GM suite. Users should send their sharps for disposal immediately after using the suite.

equipment is outdated and not being replaced. Severe lack of CO2 incubators. furthermore, CO2 incubators have been failing one by one and are not being repaired when engineers are coming to service them. Similar problem with microbiology cabinets. Despite lengthy shutdowns (a whole month of closure every year) these things aren't being addressed.

In the virus room, the aspirators are often not working/broken. Lots of the equipment is old and/or dirty.

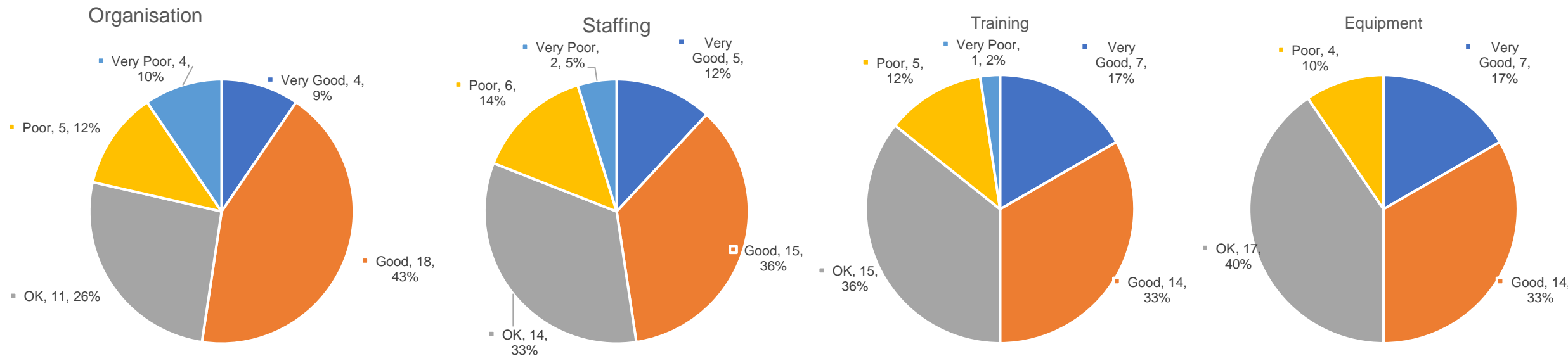
Hoods are rusty, equipment not available, room organisation poor

Some of the aspirators in the CL3 labs are broken and can't be used and the hoods are quite old and rusty. Consumables (paper towels, etc) often run out and are not restocked.

It would be great if there could be general communal pipettes (and other infrastructure on top of what is already existing) owned centrally (lab man) which could be supplied to short term projects to avoid transport of these items in and out of cat 3 on a 6 month rotor (I appreciate budget constraints)

Most equipment in the CL3 lab are dated and the whole suite needs significant investment and upgrade/

BALM Facility



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

- Additional staffing would allow higher throughput and cover for absence
- Refresher training sessions
- Upgrading confocal microscopes
- Replacement epifluorescence microscopes

Free Text Comments

Refresher training courses would be helpful, or provision of user-friendly manuals

The BALM facilities are generally good. It might be good if there was an additional Leica microscope. The training is excellent for new members of staff.

In my experience, there's a dire need for new high-performance confocal microscopes and epifluorescence microscopes.

There is only one staff member for BALM, so when Maeve is not around there is no one else to help. BALM would benefit from at least one extra staff member. Also updated epifluorescence / widefield fluorescence microscopes that are motorised would be very good. The current epifluorescence microscope is not good.

Since the departure of Jan and Bellen, it is very difficult/impossible to work/discuss with the staff and have assistance on projects. A lot of the in-house knowledge was lost and the transition was poorly managed. I would suggest employing another staff member for the facility to optimise the use of the equipment, and make sure there is always someone inhouse or accessible remotely for any queries.

More support staff would be good for this heavily used facility.

Upgrading the confocal microscopes. The facility has improved recently with new personnel.

The previous facility manager was very competent but probably because he was alone for most of the time, there were substantive delays in training new lab members to use the equipment or existing lab members in using new equipment.

I have no complaints, but it would be helpful to have another staff member so there's always someone who can help the users with the expensive equipment.

The Zeiss 880 Multiphoton microscope, bringing back the Z: drive for data backup would be helpful.

No training support, I asked for training on StrataQuest software to analyse TissueFAXs images from October 2022 and didn't receive the training till now!

Because there are many processes, the training is hard to follow with just one long session.

The BALM manager is new. Need more time for evaluation.

Better training; upgrading the softwares; making softwares more accessible.

Most microscopes are broken. No staff around. Outdated equipment.

More than one stereoscopic fluorescent microscope. Often no-one available to help if issues arise. Z drive not functional so have to spend 10 minutes at the end of each session sending yourself the files

There is always the need for more microscopes. It would be a dream to have a 2-photon microscope on campus.

2 microscopes not working

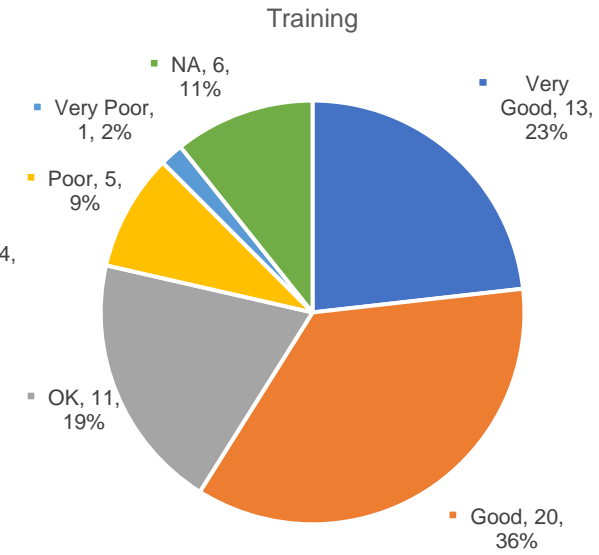
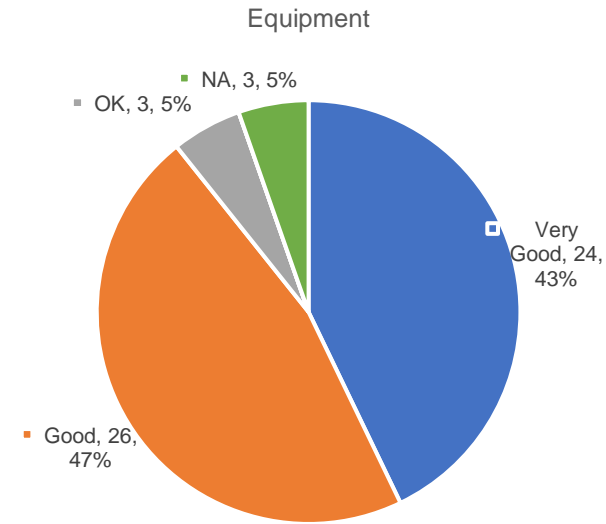
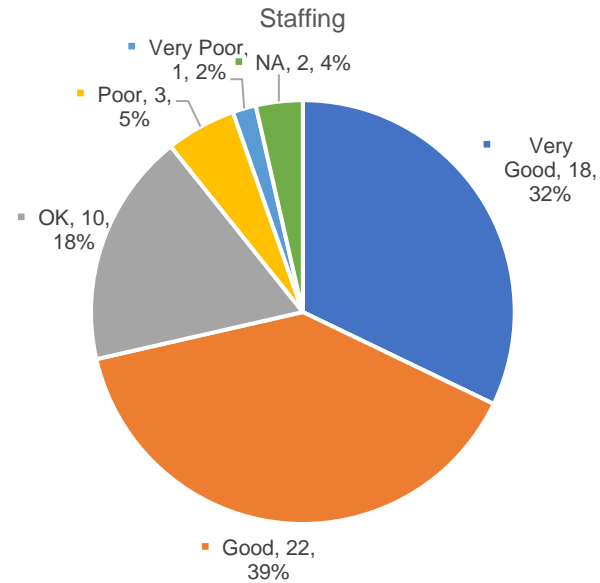
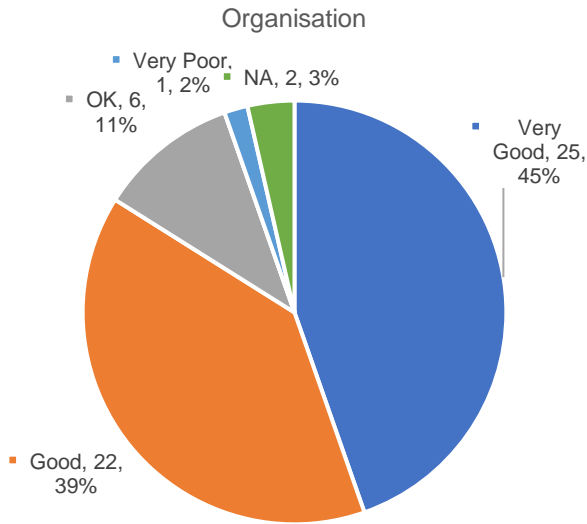
An additional epifluorescent microscope will help during busy times. I feel this facility ran better when there was a 2nd member of staff to ensure that there is always someone around in the event of faults/problems arising during imaging sessions and to provide extra assistance with image analysis.

Some of the equipment is getting old and needs replacing. Eg LSM710 frequently takes multiple attempts to turn on. Meabh is very knowledgeable and super helpful but if she's off for any reason (illness, holiday, conferences etc) there is no other support available. We really need somebody available to help when there are issues with the equipment.

I miss equipment for nanoscale analysis - high resolution imaging equipments. It is currently necessary to go externally to access this type of technology. Equipment in general is quite old and soon will get outdated, it is necessary to upgrade equipment to be able to produce cutting-edge science.

There are current specific issues with the set up of the epifluorescence microscope, which I think is being addressed

Flow Cytometry Facility



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

- Additional staffing would allow higher throughput and cover for absence
- More detailed training
- Limited sorting capacity
- Upgraded analysis computers and software

Free Text Comments

Training beyond very basic induction - lots of machines, assumed that you would just know how to use them properly

Generally, I have had no problems c FACS

Replacement of broken equipment in tissue culture and more space

Having only 1 member of staff means some machines are out of action if he's on AL or left for the day (because QC isn't done or users aren't confident with set up), and if there are problems with other machines (which is fairly frequent) there's no support. More support with things like panel building and optimisation would be an advantage.

I don't use this facility very much

Garry is very helpful and most knowledgeable, but perhaps he could do with a additional staff member.
Limited cell sorting capacity.

Since this is run by a single staff member, a plan to cover staff absences needs to be in place. Taking cells over to CHSQ is not only highly impractical, but also often detrimental to the outcome of the experiment.

maybe a discounted rate for out of hours use (because staff isn't present the service isn't the same)

haven't used it yet, but will do in the future

Organisation is good but no sorting can be done without Gary. Also no sorting can be done after 5 pm seriously limiting the scope of experimental design. An extra member of staff would be welcome for when Gary is away or when Gary is busy. Training is limited. Gary cannot realistically look after all machines, train new people or on new equipment, bid for new equipment, write papers, and help with experimental design all the times and for everyone...

The facility manager is often on leave/not on site and this has compromised experiments in the past and led to delays with our work and waste of resources as experiments had to be repeated.

I have no complaints, but it would be helpful to have another staff member so there's always someone who can help the users with the expensive equipment.

The facility is run by a single staff member. It would benefit from having another staff member for when staff members are on leave/sick. Mandatory training should be provided for new starters using the facility to ensure users know how to operate the machines adequately.

The computers with FlowJo v10 need to be updated. There is not wifi on them so cannot connect to internet to do the upgrade from there. The computer always crashes when trying to do analysis

Need succession planning for when Gary retires, and we should be offering more in the way of downstream analysis assistance, for increasingly large datasets.

Need a more detailed training for people who are new to the technique

Please find a good replacement for Gerry when he retires . People from all over FMD come here to use our excellent cell sorting facility and expertise.

Gary Warnes provides excellent support and expertise, but he needs additional staff to help when he is away or when there are several projects on the go.

I miss equipment for nanoscale analysis - high resolution equipment, currently it is necessary to go to other QMUL campuses to access these type of equipment (equipment in particular ImageStreamX Mk II).

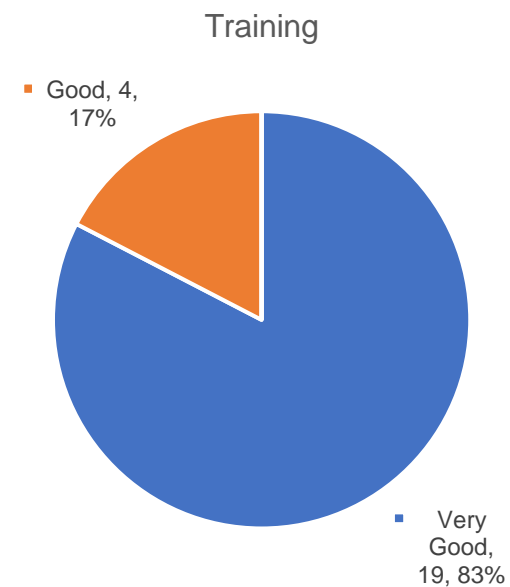
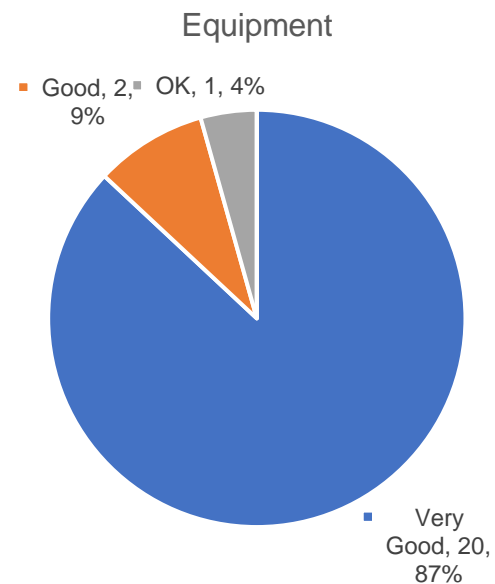
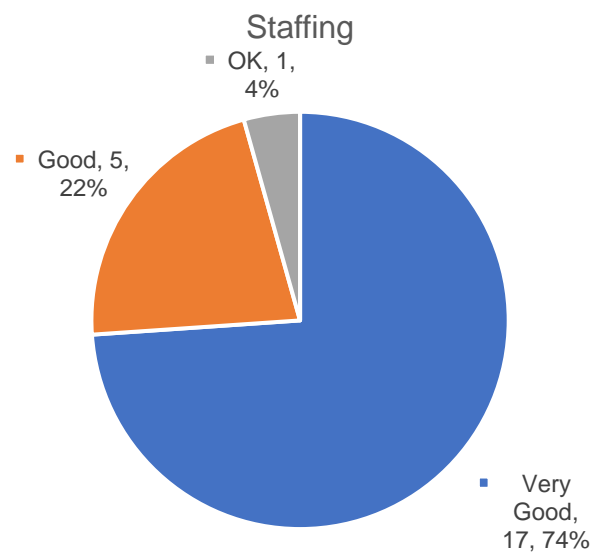
Sometimes the relationship with the FACS Facility manager is difficult

This is an excellent core facility and it runs incredibly smoothly given the very low staff numbers.

More training of users to clean the machines themselves /change the tanks/ flag up any problems so that they can do it. At the moment Gary does everything which is great but users need to be more independent. Charges are quite high too so this should be reviewed.

The cost for the usage of the Flow Cytometry facility is far too high. It is currently £30 per hour in every machine and £50 per hour for sorting cells. I regularly have £400-£500 of cost per month for my lab, which I didn't anticipate in my budget. I think that there should be a review to evaluate if there is a possibility to reduce the cost per hour for the users.

Phenotypic Screening Facility



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

- Additional staffing would allow higher throughput and cover for absence

Free Text Comments

Luke is excellent. He is very overworked.

Phenotypic screening is excellent and is one of the real differentiating services the Blizzard offers.

Phenotypic screening facilities are excellent! Could improve by having an extra staff member.

This facility is exceptional. Luke Gammon in particular should be looked after by QMUL as he is a huge asset to the Blizzard, I hope he is on track for a pay rise. I do get the impression that he is becoming over-stretched and the facility could benefit from more staffing/support team. The kit in this facility is state-of-the-art that has helped secure multiple grants.

Luke is just fantastic!

Only good things to say about this facility, which is well organised and very supportive of our work.

I have no complaints, but it would be helpful to have another staff member so there's always someone who can help the users with the expensive equipment.

Luke Gammon has been outstanding in running the facility and training people. He is absolutely excellent. I think he should be more supported as he is the only one staffing the facility and it is used by many different people. It would make sense for him to have an assistant who could take over some more basic tasks to reduce his workload and allow more time for tasks that require his expertise such as Cell Dive experiments

Luke is helpful, dedicated and knowledgeable, but quite stretched. He always tries to find time but I think that it would be good if there were more staff supporting this facility.

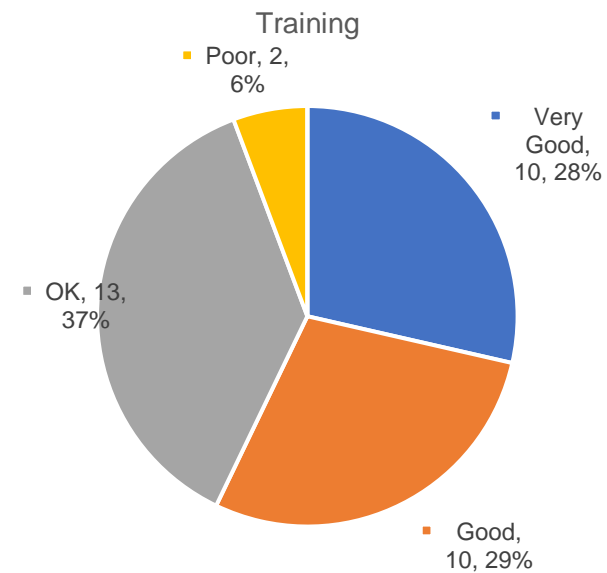
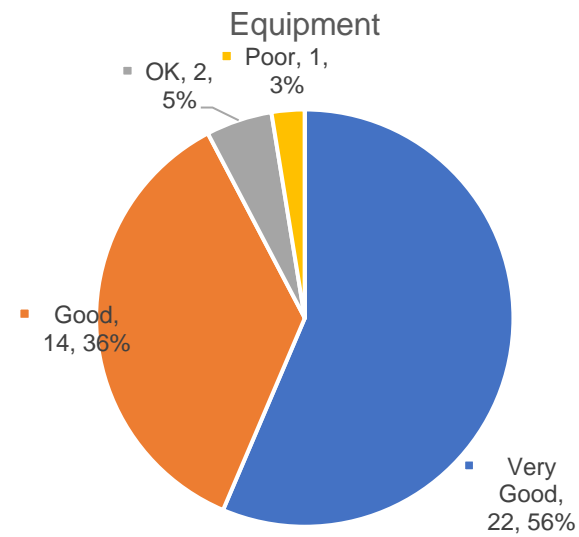
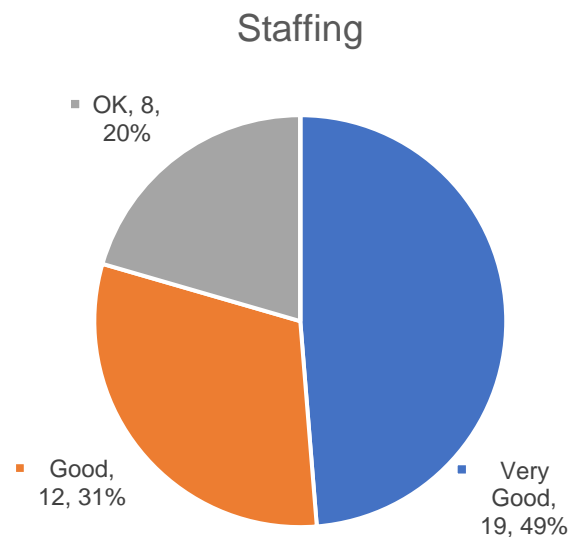
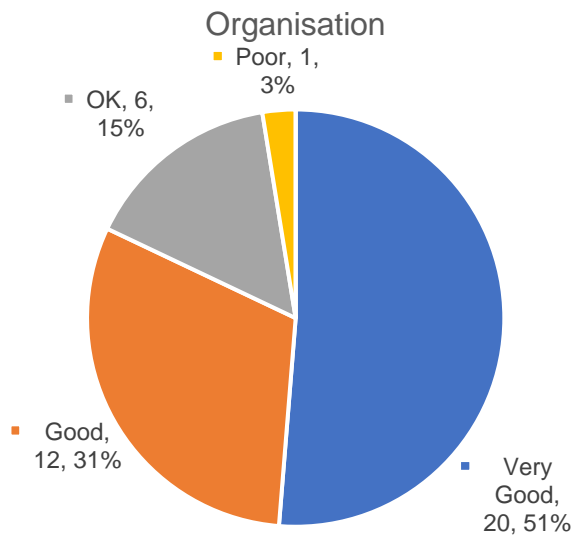
Another excellent core facility that runs well and provides very good training.

CREATE Facility

Only 3 responders.

Organisation, staffing, equipment and training either very good or good.

Genome Centre Facility



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

- Too expensive
- More training

Free Text Comments

The Genome centre can be slow and sometimes quote turnaround times of 6 weeks and then take 3 months or even longer.
Great facilities, good communication, well staffed.

We have excellent good high-end kit. However, the cost of the facility is problematic and not always competitive. I typically run simpler RNASeq work externally as it is both cheaper and quicker.

Expensive and long lead time for some projects.

I have found that prices of Genome Centre are currently much higher (especially for large projects) than outsourcing, even with "internal" prices. It would obviously be preferable to sequencing in-house, but can be difficult with budget restraints. Specific monthly training courses (could have a fee or not) for pieces of equipment or basic bioinformatics pipelines (this is now being informally covered by the Bioinformatics forum). Automated robots that staff can use for nucleic acid extraction and library preparation

Useless for microbial sequencing. Uncompetitive in open market and no expertise in analysis of bacterial data

I would like to use this facility more often, prices have often been non competitive, even when taking into account that we do not pay VAT when we use an internal facility.
More Genome Centre staff needed! Otherwise they provide a great service - we just need more of it!

It might be good to have some sort of readily accessible and updated list of the services on offer and a ballpark price list?

Lots of unused old equipment and these should be removed to create more space. Upgrade of BALM facilities should be considered given that fellow institutes or faculty in QMUL have much advanced microscopy

Faster turn around rates

Waiting times for RNA-seq results are long and they are always short staffed. Also there is a need for more bioinformatician support for the data analysis part.

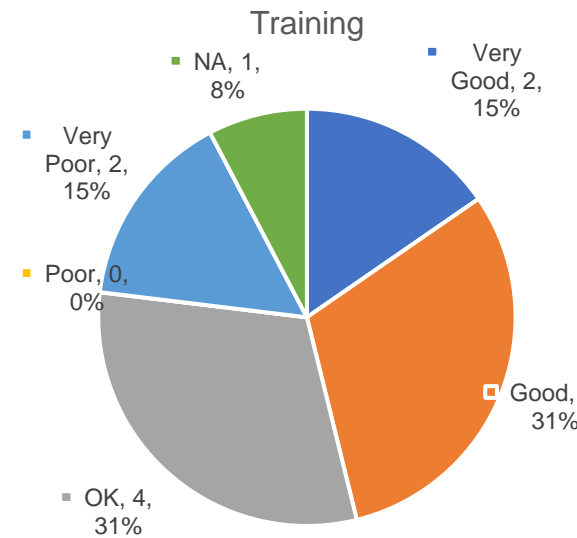
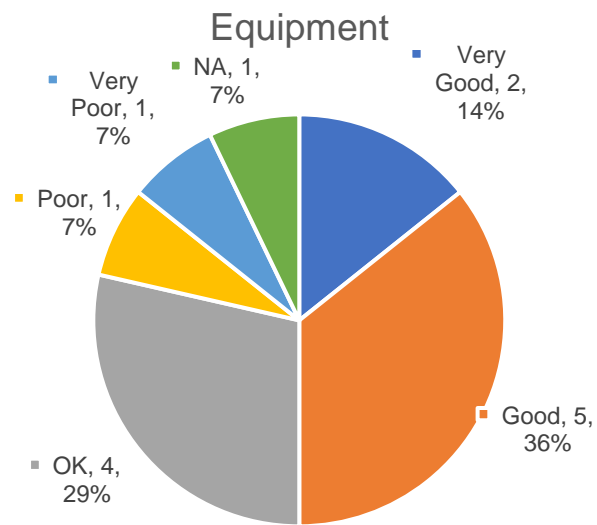
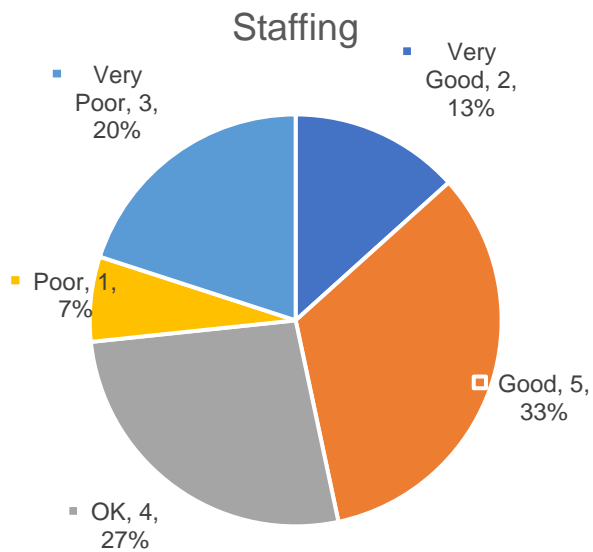
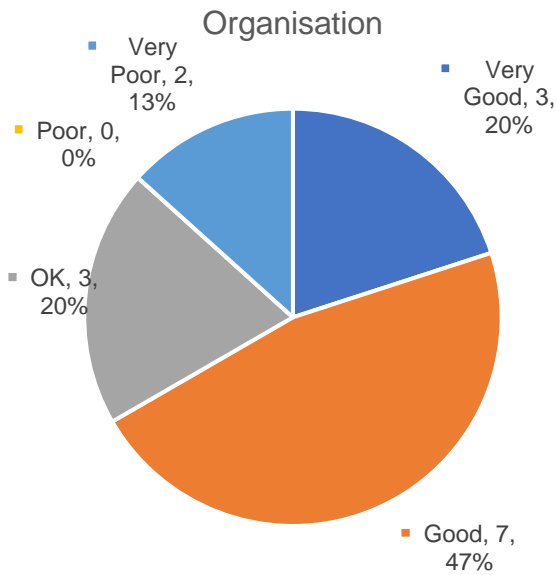
I feel there is a need for more bioinformatics support. James does a fantastic job at supporting analysis of data such as RNAseq, but for those with limited experience with this type of analysis it can be a long process. More bioinformatics help to enable more indepth analysis would be great.

A very good service, but can be very slow.

I am not aware of the training provided by the Genome Centre. Some of the equipment is obsolete and the costs for some of their services are prohibitive. The staff is great but turnaround time can be relatively slow at times, especially relative to cost.

I think more training would be good for example to allow users to run their own samples on the tapestation/bioanalyser if more of these machines were available. The issue with the genome centre is it is expensive and booked up so the epigenetics labs still need their own separate bioanalyzer for this reason.

Core Pathology Facility



Key Themes from suggestions for improvements:

Only 5 suggestions:

I have not used Core pathology recently. In the past they were generally good but slow.

The fact that the Core pathology is understaffed and gives priority to clinical samples (understandably) makes the waiting times for project completion very very long. We are missing deadlines and being less competitive in comparison to other departments and institutions due to this slow and expensive service. More staff dedicated for research projects is essential

Barely functional

Dedicated Blizzard staff to oversea pathology of humam tissues

I now use an external facility and I am very happy with my current arrangements, I do not plan to use this facility in the near future

General Stores Facility

Yes: 70; No: 18; NA:13

Supply Centre

Yes: 54; No: 23; NA:24

Life Tech: 34

Merck: 35

Promega: 17

Other: 13 (Star labs, Thermo fisher (x3), Fisher Scientific, Cell Signaling Technology, VWR, BioRad, Invitrogen, NEB (x3), GIBCO, StemCell technologies, Statlabs, Eppendorf (x2), thermoscientific, Monarch

Chemical Database

Yes: 75, No: 20, NA: 6