

Implementation of an Infection Sciences Pocket Guide

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Introduction

In any diagnostic laboratory working to ISO15189:2022 standard document control can be a challenge. When staff are working in areas away from computers they are unable to access the eQMS which means staff rely on printed controlled copies of documents. HSL Infection Sciences found that these copies were often moved around the laboratory so were difficult to locate.

Solution

The initial solution trialled was to increase the number of controlled copies of documents in the laboratory. This was administratively inefficient due to the challenge of removing and replacing all copies after an update. IT also did not address documents being moved around the laboratory as staff took the documents with them as they worked.

As this did not effectively address the issue the department determined criteria for a new solution:

- Staff must have easy access to the information they require.
- The information must be presented clearly and be easy to navigate.

The solution devised Laboratory was to create a laboratory handbook which fits in a lab coat pocket and could be issued to all staff.

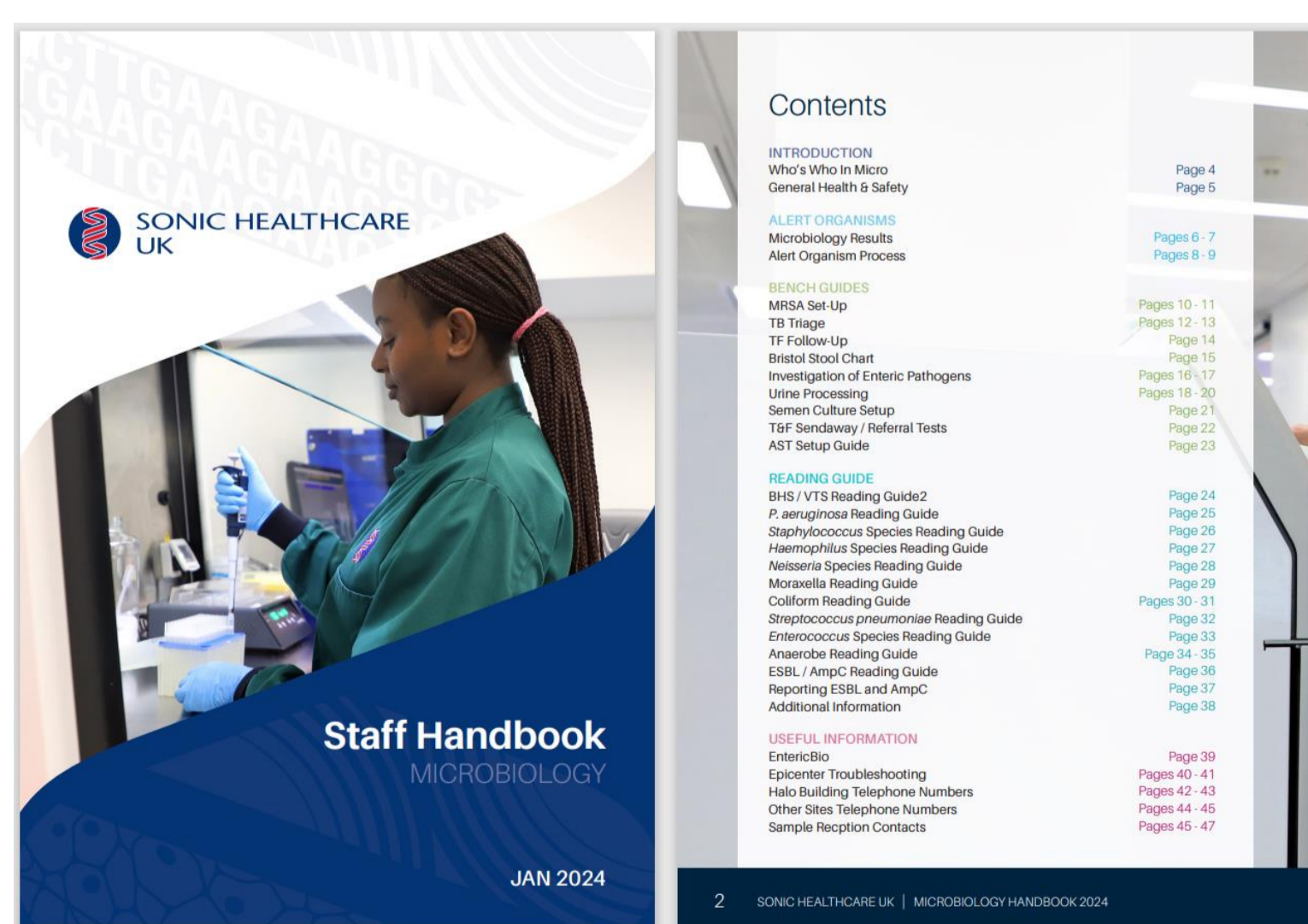


Figure 1. 2024 Microbiology Staff Handbook cover and contents page.

Content

To ensure the content was useful a consultation was carried out with three staff groups, Senior BMS staff, bench BMS staff, and support staff:

- The Senior BMS staff wanted information on communicating with laboratory users.
- The bench BMS staff wanted technical information e.g. AST disc reading guides.
- Support staff wanted information on sample handling and equipment troubleshooting.
- All staff groups asked for a list of telephone numbers and email addresses.

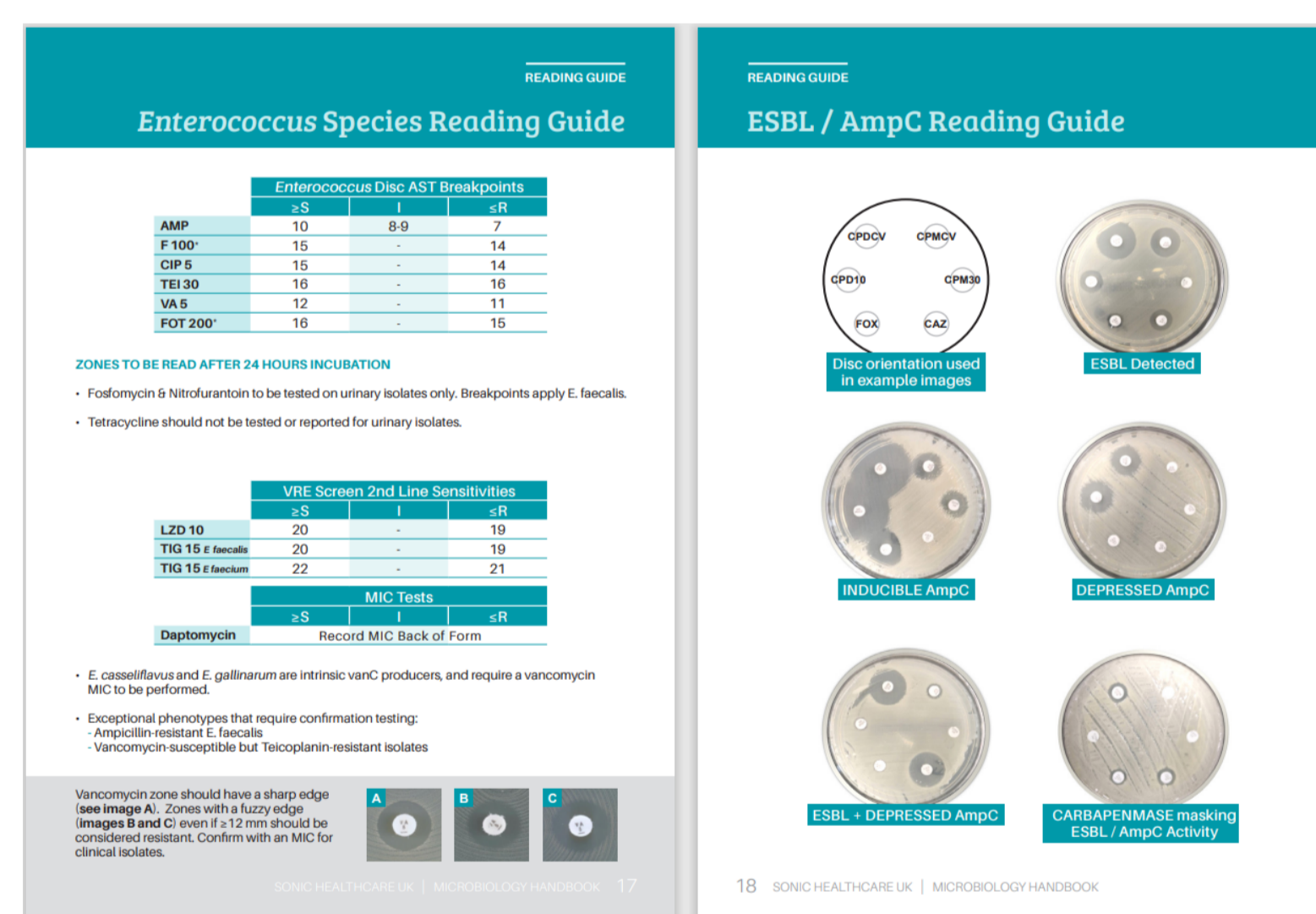


Figure 2. 2023 Microbiology *Enterococcus* and ESBL/AmpC reading guides (information based on EUCAST guidelines²)

After reviewing the feedback, much of the information requested by staff was added. The handbook also included:

- Document control information.
- A who's who of senior laboratory staff including pictures.
- Basic laboratory health and safety information.
- A list of first aiders, fire marshals, and fire wardens.
- The year of issue on the cover so staff knew which edition they were using.

Improvements Seen

- Printed controlled documents are no longer being misplaced within the laboratory, with only two requests for reprinting made since the handbooks became available.
- Reduced number of Incidents caused by staff failing to check documentation.

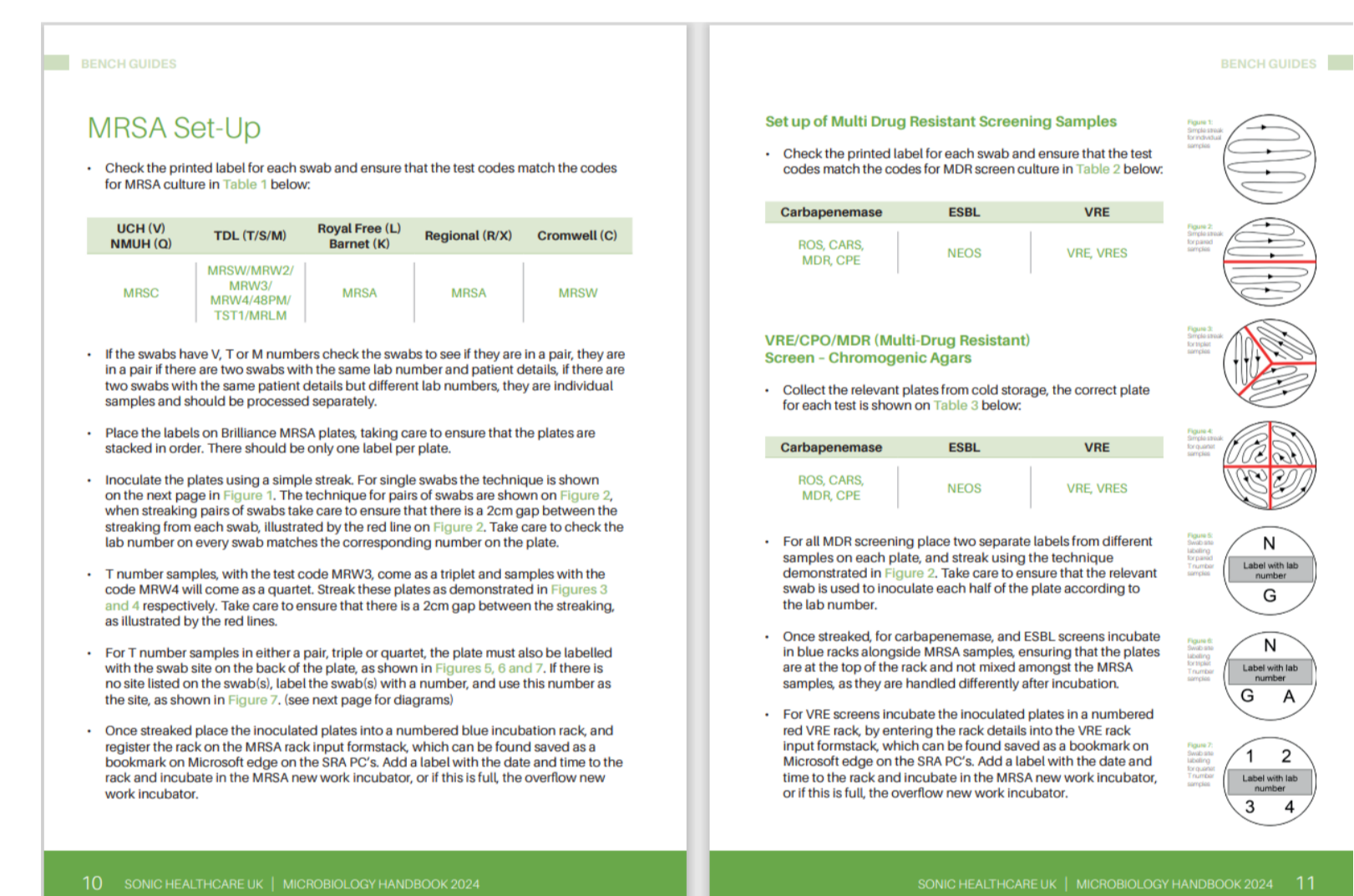


Figure 3. MRSA set-up pages added to the 2024 handbook after staff feedback

Staff feedback on the handbook has been overwhelmingly positive.

- Staff regularly suggest additions and improvements for the next edition and led to the 2024 handbook being 20 pages longer than 2023.
- Senior BMS staff fed back that the handbook has reduced the time they spend giving basic information.

Conclusion

Introduction of a Staff handbook in HSL Infection Sciences has increased availability of document-controlled information, reduced instances of old documentation remaining in the laboratory, improved senior staff time efficiency, and reduced incidents.

References

1. ISO15189:2022 Medical laboratories — Requirements for quality and competence, Edition 4, 2022-12
2. EUCAST Clinical breakpoints - breakpoints and guidance [online]. 2024. https://www.eucast.org/clinical_breakpoints (accessed 19 July 2024).