

Wellcome Genome Campus | 1-18_scaling_up_in_pandemic_video_2_v2 (Original)

How do you control the quality of the test at this scale, and how do you manage the lab information? And is this somehow standardised across all the national labs?

Yeah. That's a great question. It's really important. We have a couple of advantages. One thing is that we do the same thing, one thing, all day. Every day. And so there's very little diversity. This can creep in as maybe sort of boring at times, so you have to manage that and make sure that operators stay engaged so they don't make mistakes.

But what it means is training is simplified. All the SOPs are much easier to follow because there's really only one path for anything to-- any sample to go down. But it is a very large organisation. There are lots of samples going through, and we have very little capability of planning what our day looks like.

We get samples when we get samples because people put swabs in their nose. And so we had to build that in. That's where the diversity comes rather than diversity of different sample types, for instance.

So we have a very rigorous training programme. Everyone has to be qualified on the workstation that they belong. People can get qualified on multiple workstations to add some diversity to their day-to-day work, as well as opportunities for advancement so people can become team leaders or work more on the Quality team or in the Data team, any sorts of things to advance their careers, as well as get a little extra stimulation and diversity.

And then the quality system itself has to be as world-leading as the rest of our organisation. So when we set up the lab, we had to move very quickly. Fortunately, my business also has an ISO quality system, and we were able to just copy that over and then build from there so that we had the necessary tools to have the accreditation required for this. But it's a massive undertaking to make sure that these things are in place.

And then we have to constantly monitor it to make sure that no problems sneak in and get out to patients. And so we have an entire team dedicated to a whole number of checks on a day-to-day, hour-to-hour basis, as well as management reviews over time, and make sure that there's no changes in performance that would indicate a problem, even a very small problem. When you're running at our scale, you can see very quickly. You can react and make sure that it gets fixed before it creeps into any impact to patients.