



Pathology

Service update

April 2024

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Introduction – Message from Anthony

Dear colleagues,



Welcome to the latest Pathology Service update with a round up of all the latest news and developments. It's been a busy time since the last update in December and lots of work has been taking place across the network to develop our services and future clinical model.

Exciting new developments are starting to improve the way we work. Our digital pathology team are in the process of rolling out new digital pathology technology in our laboratories, starting with Royal Preston Hospital, which is set to transform the way we work, and we are also continuing to install new equipment in laboratories across the system.

Our next Pathology Service Colleague Briefing will take place on Friday 17 May from 2pm–3pm via Microsoft Teams Live and I hope you will be able to join us for more information about all the latest news and developments. The session will follow the same format as the previous briefing. We'll be sharing an update on progress that's being made with the business case for a new consolidated facility and there will be several updates from the pathology leadership team before colleagues have the opportunity to ask any questions. You can join the call on the day by scanning the QR Code below or [clicking here](#). For those of you unable to attend, the recording will be shared through your Trust's communication channels. Thanks as always for all your continued hard work and support.

Best wishes,

Professor Anthony Rowbottom

Managing Director – Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Service



What's included?

In this issue, you can find more information about all the latest news and developments taking place across the Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Service Network including updates on the rollout of digital pathology technologies in our laboratories, our new Business Manager, Paddy McGee, the latest cancer diagnostics news and the news around our plans to develop a consolidated hub for Lancashire and South Cumbria.

- **Digital Pathology update**.....page 3
- **Cause of Death update**page 4
- **Microbiology Summit**page 4
- **Healthcare Science Week 2024**.....page 5
- **Visits to other networks - Leeds / Liverpool**.....page 5
- **Pathology Maturity Matrix /Quality**.....page 6
- **Introduction to Paddy McGee, Business Manager**page 7
- **Meet your new Partnership Officer - Introduction to Jonathan Grisdale (Jono)**...page 7
- **Workforce update**.....page 8
- **Cancer diagnostics update**.....page 9
- **Procurement**.....page 10

Open day event showcases exciting new digital pathology technology



A digital pathology open day was held in March at Royal Preston Hospital to showcase new technologies that are set to be introduced in our pathology laboratories across Lancashire and South Cumbria from May 2024.

Supplier, Roche, joined the digital pathology project team to answer questions about how the new technology will work in practice.

New digital imaging equipment and Roche DP200 and DP600 scanners will be introduced in laboratories at Royal Preston Hospital from May, which will help transform patient care, clinical decision-making and pathology workflow. The implementation of the Roche Navify digital pathology system at Preston will be followed by a phased rollout of the technologies in all pathology laboratories across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The digital pathology project team will work with colleagues from Roche and local IT and Estates teams to undertake some initial enabling works to facilitate the introduction and ensure a seamless transition to new ways of working.

All this has been made possible thanks to significant investment from NHS England and Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) to take the service forward and adopt new technologies. The implementation of digital pathology is the culmination of five years of hard work from colleagues across the collaboration.

Craig Rogers, Lead Biomedical Scientist in Cellular Pathology and involved with the implementation of digital pathology, said: "Until a few years ago, digital pathology was seen as an aspiration for the future. It is now becoming standard practice across the UK in the NHS, private sector and veterinary services. Pathology services around the North West are already using and reporting digitally, so Lancashire and South Cumbria

need to introduce this technology to provide the best service for our patients."

Colleagues will receive training on the new system as part of the implementation process and phased rollout. Craig added: "The workflow of the lab will change from the traditional method of moving glass microscope slides around to scanning the slides at checkout stage and making them available as a digital image. That will begin to change as slides are scanned and then archived, and the images are quality controlled from a monitor.

"All four sites will have additional equipment - the Roche DP200 and DP600 scanners. The sites without Roche Laboratory Advantage will also see new workstations and label printers to enable barcoding. Slides will still be stored as they are now and images will be stored following RCPATH guidance.

"The traditional microscope will be used less in diagnosis, though it won't be completely replaced. The greatest change will be viewing an image on a screen rather than down a microscope. Over the next few years, the data in those images can be used with artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist pathologists and support their diagnosis."

Digital images will be readily available via any networked PC and colleagues will be able to share images within a local, regional, national, or international network, to facilitate crucial second/specialist opinion, remote working and out of hours reporting. In short, the system will improve patient outcomes, diagnostic workflow and service quality, and benefit the workforce by offering workload improvements.

Currently, thousands of slides are sent around the region for primary reporting, second opinion and MDT review. Digital pathology images will reduce this, as the images will eventually be available to all pathologists across the region. This is likely to reduce the time required for MDT discussion and second opinion where cases are shared around the departments in the collaboration, for example in breast pathology.

For more information about the implementation of digital pathology in our laboratories, please contact Claire Hamilton, Project Manager, Pathology Collaboration Digital Team: Claire.hamilton@lthtr.nhs.uk.



Cause of Death update



We are pleased to confirm that filming has now concluded for season three of the popular Channel 5 series Cause of Death.

Crews have been on site at Royal Preston and Royal Blackburn Hospitals for the last six months working with clinicians as well as partners from Lancashire Police and Lancashire County Council.

Season 3 will be split into two parts with five episodes set to be aired later this summer before a further five episodes air towards winter.

Thank you to all pathology colleagues who have been involved in the series' production.

You can catch up on the [first two seasons of Cause of Death](#) on My5.

Microbiology Summit event welcomes Chief Scientific Officer to the region



Microbiology colleagues from Lancashire and South Cumbria's Pathology Service recently attended a Microbiology Summit event during this year's Healthcare Science Week.

They were joined by microbiology colleagues from Greater Manchester and Cheshire and Merseyside and Chief Scientific Officer for NHS England, Dame Prof Sue Hill, to take a look at current priorities and challenges for healthcare sciences both regionally and nationally.

Priority areas identified include partnership working, promoting patient quality and safety, ensuring equitable access to care, a reduction in health inequalities, workforce education and training, and the importance of effective leadership in delivering safe care.

Hosted by the North West Healthcare Science Network, attendees enjoyed a range of presentations from LSC colleagues looking at key issues and challenges affecting healthcare sciences. As part of the event, Rachel Banks, Associate Director of Quality and Governance for the LSC Pathology Services Network gave a presentation on the blood culture pathway and microbiology standards for diagnosing and managing sepsis and Clinical Scientist, Robert Shorten also gave a presentation on the role of clinical scientists.

Chief Scientific Officer for NHS England, Dame Prof Sue Hill outlined the national strategy and vision for healthcare sciences, which was supplemented by a presentation from Helen Liggett, North West Regional Healthcare Science Lead on regional healthcare science priorities, successes and challenges. The summit spent some time looking at new ways of working with a particular focus on workforce and professional leadership, system leadership and the role of innovation and research in directing the future of healthcare sciences.

One of the aims behind the event is to develop a national and regional plan for healthcare sciences based on the feedback and topics discussed at the event. We will keep you updated as this work develops.



Healthcare Science Week 2024



Colleagues from around the region have been busy promoting healthcare science as a career as part of Healthcare Science Week 2024 (11-15 March).

During the week, we featured some of our colleagues and the fantastic work they do via our social media channels. Thank you to Susan Hibbert, Laura Worrall and Callum Goolden for sharing details about the work you do in your specialisms. You can view the videos on our [LinkedIn channel](#).

As ever, it was a great opportunity to raise awareness about the diversity of the scientific workforce employed within the NHS and celebrate the variety of professions available as a career. Healthcare science has a significant role to play within the NHS. The work of healthcare scientists underpins over a billion diagnostic investigations and treatment interventions a year, accounting for 80% of NHS diagnostic tests. This work impacts three in four of all clinical decisions made in the NHS.

Whilst Healthcare Science Week aims to promote healthcare science as a career for the next generation, it's also about continued career development for colleagues already working within the profession. To find out more about developing your career in healthcare science, visit: [Healthcare science | Health Careers](#).

Pathology Team network visits help inform best practice



Several visits have recently taken place to other pathology facilities in the North West to find out more about how other networks are developing their services in line with the requirements of the NHS England Maturity Matrix.

Recent visits to Leeds and Liverpool pathology facilities have been a great opportunity to share learning and best practice, as the Pathology Leadership team develop the business case to obtain £32m funding to enable the development of a consolidated pathology facility for Lancashire and South Cumbria and to advance our work in histopathology-genomics.

The plans for a central pathology facility would see a new, consolidated facility being built using a phased approach. The first phase would see all Microbiology, Virology and Immunology services being located together in a new central facility, with other teams relocating to the hub at a later date using a phased approach.

Teams at Leeds and Liverpool are well underway with plans to consolidate their pathology network and the visits have provided an excellent opportunity to use the learning from their experiences to help develop our Business Case.



Pathology Services Network makes good progress in achieving Mature Network Status

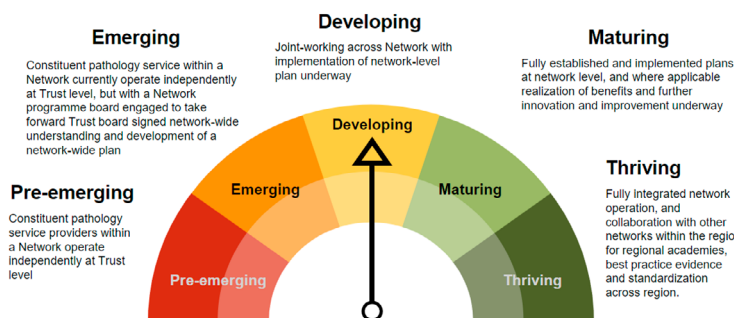


The Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Network is making good progress in delivering its transformation plans and working towards mature network status.

The NHS Long Term Plan outlined a commitment to establishing pathology networks across England and each network is continually

assessed against a Maturity Matrix to identify how well the network is progressing in terms of general operations and service transformation.

There are five maturity levels: pre-emerging, emerging, developing, maturing and thriving and all networks are expected to reach maturing status by 2024.



Good governance is essential in helping pathology services to identify how well they are progressing in terms of their transformation journey to achieve thriving network status. The Maturity Matrix sets out a defined structure for both collaboration, governance and operational management across pathology networks.

Each pathology network is regularly assessed against seven domains including: governance, leadership, operational, quality, IT and digital, workforce and shared supply chain. (see opposite table).

In Lancashire and South Cumbria, Associate Director of Quality and Governance, Rachel Banks is responsible for overseeing this work on behalf of the LSC Pathology Network. Rachel monitors the delivery and progress of several key Network projects, managing risk and ensuring the implementation of a robust governance framework to enable successful delivery of the Network's Maturity Matrix action plans to achieve Maturing status by April 2025.

The quality and governance structure in place is designed to meet the requirements of the NHSE Maturity Matrix but also to give confidence and assurance to all stakeholders that there is a robust framework in place to support all the projects and developments that are underway during the transition to becoming a mature network.

Lancashire and South Cumbria's pathology network is making great progress towards achieving Maturing status, evidenced by the progress being made in key areas including the development and implementation of Network Pathology Quality Assurance reporting (PQAD) equipment upgrades in our laboratories, the introduction of digital pathology, and plans to consolidate the network with a new consolidated facility.

As a network, service transformation plans are helping to improve service quality and patient outcomes, and the vision of delivering an innovative, high quality and world-class diagnostic service is becoming a reality. Thank you to all our colleagues for your support in helping to drive this work forward.

The 7 Domains that characterise a Pathology Network are;

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Governance | A single governance model signed off by all network member Trust and ICS Boards, with clear clinical and operational leadership arrangements where dissolution would require Trust Board approval |
| Leadership | A single accountable officer appointed at network level e.g. Network SRO, and other leadership roles defined and appointed to |
| Operational | Agreed clinical, operating and business models signed off by Trust Boards e.g. consolidation of services at agreed sites and integration into clinical pathways |
| Quality | A common quality management process and methodology for oversight of performance, quality and clinical governance including working with local, regional and national systems such as PQAD and single UKAS accreditation process. |
| IT and Digital | A digital roadmap setting out how the network will achieve digital interoperability across the whole local healthcare system and digitization of cellular pathology services with shared digital pathology reporting. |
| Workforce | Agreed workforce strategy for passporting/mobility, Skill mix (including the role of clinical scientists), training and CPD and recruitment and retention, managed via a Network workforce lead |
| Shared Supply Chain | A shared joint procurement strategy with robust supply chain and joint purchasing at scale for example shared Managed Service Contract across the network, or a clear process and timeline to achieve one. |



Workforce update

Workforce



The Workforce Team are currently developing a Workforce Strategy following engagement with Pathology staff across the network.

This work will produce a list of initiatives to assist in the development of a plan to support training and development of the workforce and support the Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Service to achieve network maturity.

The Workforce team have engaged over 150 colleagues to develop the strategy, either by survey, face-to-face meetings or workshop sessions.

A final version of the Workforce Strategy will be shared with colleagues later this year and will include more information around training and development and plans to support the pathology workforce, as service transformation plans move forward.

Training and development will be a key feature of the new Workforce Strategy and there are several initiatives already underway. A single training policy is currently awaiting approval by the Trusts and will be shared with colleagues when it has been approved.

Applications have been made for funding from NHS England to support increased student numbers on apprenticeships, the Scientist Training Programme (STP) and Highly Specialist Scientist Training (HSST) Training Programme. Funding already received from NHS England is being used to develop and maintain a training database. The database will keep track of training and development requirements and progress for all colleagues and will enable the management of upskilling the pathology workforce.

Out of hours training school

With support from NHS England, we are also developing an out of hours training school to fast track the training and registration process of Biomedical Scientists. Network pressures have in some cases halted the training process or slowed it down. By providing this out of hours service, we are hoping to clear the backlog and encourage colleagues to complete their registration portfolios more quickly.

NHS Futures platform

In order to support the training and development of colleagues, we have started to share all our training materials and resources on the [NHS Futures platform](#). This includes all courses, training materials, videos and CPD activities. Courses are currently available on key topics including leadership, management, human factors, neurodiversity and educator training.

Network training

Going forward, we will deliver training as a network more in order to achieve economies of scale and ensure standardisation of practice across the region. This will include registration portfolio sessions, apprenticeships, human factors and STP training. Our plans also include registration of network assessors and verifiers, which will allow the network to carry out assessment and verification in-house and consult with the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) to allow fast track registration. The IBMS currently have a 3-month waiting list for this.

For more information on our Workforce Strategy or training and development, please contact Gillian.Crankshaw@lthtr.nhs.uk or Rehanara.Khatun2@lthtr.nhs.uk.



Meet the Team

Meet our new Business Manager Paddy



A big welcome to our new Business Manager, Paddy McGee! Paddy joins the Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Service from NHS Greater Manchester ICS, where he worked as Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance.

Paddy joined the NHS through the NHS Graduate Management Scheme and has undertaken several different roles in operations and commissioning before joining us here in Lancashire.

Commenting on his new role, Paddy said: "I am looking forward to getting out and about to meet everyone. Together the Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Service delivers pathology services to almost three million people across eight sites and it's a great time to be joining the service with the exciting plans underway to consolidate the network and work more collaboratively. Pathology is a crucial component in the delivery of health services and joining the team here in Lancashire is a great opportunity to support innovation in service delivery."

In his new role, Paddy will be focussing on strategy and operations for the network. He will work with colleagues from across Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS to deliver the ten strategic objectives of the Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Service including pan-pathology procurement, point of care testing and the introduction of digital pathology. Welcome to the team Paddy!

Meet your new Partnership Officer Jono



Welcome to our new Partnership Officer, Jonathan (Jono) Grisdale! Jono joins us from Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, where he has worked as an Electrician for the Estates team since 2007 and as a Staff Side and Health and Safety Representative.

Jono will be working for the Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Services Network three days a week on secondment (Monday, Tuesday and Friday). Jono's role will be a crucial one as we continue to develop a new clinical model and work towards the development of a new central facility. His work for the network will involve engagement with colleagues from across the region to listen to any concerns that people have and ensure that staff get the answers they need to any questions raised, as plans evolve.

If colleagues have any questions they would like to raise, they can contact Jono at: Jonathan.grisdale@lthtr.nhs.uk.

Welcome to the network Jono!



Cancer diagnostics update

Good progress continues to be made to transform local cancer services



Deborah Lakeland, Cancer Genomics Project Manager.

With a continued focus from the government on the recovery of health services following the COVID-19 pandemic, hospital trusts in Lancashire and South Cumbria are working closely with the ICB and NHS England to progress plans to improve diagnostic capacity and waiting times for diseases including cancer.

As part of this work, NHS England has asked all pathology networks to develop local improvement plans that focus on several key areas including optimisation of histopathology services, enhancing the skills of the pathology workforce, consolidation of services, upgrades to the hospital estate and equipment, and the acceleration of plans around digitisation and automation of services.

Challenging turnaround targets have been set by NHS England, who are measuring our performance through the Pathology Quality Assurance Dashboard (PQAD). We are continuing to implement transformation plans that will help local services to achieve these ambitious targets.

Our pathology teams are promoting best practice and learning in the delivery of cancer services through our involvement with several key genomics projects. Our teams have worked incredibly hard to implement a best practice pathway for Lynch Syndrome early diagnosis over the past 3 years which is already making a difference to the lives of many patients and their families when a cancer diagnosis is received.

The Lancashire and South Cumbria Pathology Services Network is also involved with other projects including the development of a Cellular Pathology Genomic Centre (CPGC) which facilitates equitable access to the latest standard of care molecular analysis, and a Cancer Vaccines Launch Pad which in the first instance will identify patients with colorectal cancers who are eligible to be entered into a BioNTech cancer vaccine trial.

Our involvement with the Improving Molecular Pathways and Cancer Turnaround Times (IMPACCT) project is also mapping in detail several priority cancer pathways impacted by molecular testing. This information will help baseline and inform pathway improvements that align with Cancer Waiting Time standards and meet the expectations of the NHSE Genomics Unit for radically reduced testing turnaround times.

Exciting developments with the Multi-Cancer Blood Testing Programme (MCBTP, formerly known as the GRAIL pilot) are also helping to improve the early detection of cancer in people years before they experience any clinically actionable symptoms. As a network, we should be very proud of our achievements. Our teams have been at the forefront of this work, targeting 58,720 asymptomatic individuals in underserved and deprived areas in the region. The LSC Pathology Network will provide the logistics for biosample transport to six GRAIL collection hubs for onward distribution to the test facility in California. Participants with positive results returned will be actioned as urgent electronic referrals by the Non-Specific Symptoms Cancer Pathway teams in five Trusts for their diagnostic work up. If the trial underway in other networks is successful, go live will take place in September 2024 and this exciting work could see 235 cancers detected over a 2-year period at a much earlier, affordable and treatable stage.



Procurement

Behind the scenes with procurement



Have you ever wondered how the procurement and supply chain works within an organisation as large as the NHS? It can be a tough job sourcing products and services and managing the movement of those goods around our hospitals.

The work our procurement teams do behind the scenes has the potential to transform patient care, influence clinical decision-making and workflow, and is a vital part in the smooth running of our healthcare services.

Working hard behind the scenes to make it all happen is Procurement Manager, Matthew Farmer, who works for the Lancashire Procurement Cluster (LPC).

Matthew is responsible for sourcing goods and services for pathology services and he has played a key role in procuring the new equipment that is being introduced in our laboratories across the region.

Matthew's role is a multi-faceted but very important one in our hospitals. Not only is he responsible for managing supply contracts; his role is also important for ensuring business continuity for many of our services. A delay in the supply of products or services can have a significant impact on service delivery in our wards and departments.

A typical day for Matthew can involve drafting notices to inform suppliers about the intention to put a tender out for a contract, to sourcing goods and services, identifying stakeholder lists and day-to-day contract management; all done whilst working within strict procurement guidelines.

Matthew works closely with colleagues from other disciplines including finance and legal services to ensure the timely delivery of large multi-million pound contracts for key projects including the imminent rollout of new digital pathology technology that is set to be introduced in laboratories across Lancashire and South Cumbria from May 2024.

