

BCPS Pathology News

GP edition | December 2019

Introducing Black Country Pathology Services

After several years of planning, last autumn the four pathology departments within the Black Country became united as 'Black Country Pathology Services' (BCPS) to jointly deliver pathology across all four acute Trusts.

The long term plans of BCPS are to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of pathology in the Black Country. Our key aim is to ensure we offer modern sustainable and relevant pathology services into the future.

Plans for the future

BCPS aims to ensure that NHS pathology is taken forward in a sustainable way and that we can fully utilise the huge amounts of scientific development that is occurring. Pathology in the United Kingdom has worked well over the many years but there have been pressure points that are well known to us. These have included lack of specialist staff from consultants in various disciplines as well as professional staff throughout pathology laboratories.

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Hub and spoke model

We are working to put resources in place to be able to transition to a hub and spoke model.

This sees capital investment at the New Cross Hospital site in Wolverhampton. An extension to the pathology block will see this pathology site become the Black Country hub for pathology. Once this is complete then we will see our main microbiology and histopathology's services being concentrated at this new hub, as well as large facilities to enable us to process very large volumes of hematology, biochemistry and immunology samples.

Comprehensive equipment to service the needs of acute hospital 'hub' sites will be in place. For example, the pathology work required for inpatients and acute areas such as emergency departments will be retained locally. This will also extend to any urgent work from GPs undertaken at local level.

It is estimated the whole build will be complete by May 2020.



The basement foundations have been laid and the steel structure will follow.



Artists impression of how the pathology hub at New Cross will look.

BCPS website for you

In the last few months we have been working to produce our BCPS website. The site is now live on the internet.

Information for our General Practitioners

We have added hyperlinks to existing local pathology pages for our four Trusts. Once our services are harmonised we will move to one website area for professionals. This should make it easier to navigate and see current information.

Public information

The website is an important link to the general public. There is growing

interest on the work that is undertaken by pathology departments.

We have already produced specific pages that we believe will be particularly relevant to the public.



BCPS across the Black Country

The new model of pathology delivery sees current services provided by our four Trusts brought together to form a much larger organisation. The first year has seen a single management structure put in place as well as the Clinical Leadership team that is announced here on page 4. The procurement and setting up of a Black Country wide pathology computer system will underpin the new service delivery. A full procurement of analytical platforms across all laboratory sites will ensure we have the latest equipment to support us.

Rejected microbiology samples audit

A recent audit of our sample and labelling policy has identified significant numbers of samples being rejected due to non-compliance with specimen requirements.

For example, between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, the SWBH Microbiology laboratories received over 130 000 specimens from GP practices. Each month, over 600 of these samples were rejected within the SWBH catchment area. It is likely the same issues are arising for other pathology tests.

Please take this opportunity to remind your staff of the sampling and labelling requirements to reduce the number of samples being rejected and any subsequent impact on patients.

For further information or specific sample collection, please consult your local Trust's Pathology Handbook.

Did you know...

- Each year almost 8,000 samples from GP Practices within the SWBH catchment area are rejected
- Rejected samples cost the CCG over £36,000 a year (excluding cost of GP consultation and antibiotics)

What is the impact of rejected samples?

- Unnecessary antibiotics
- Increased selection of antibiotic resistance
- Delay in infection control precautions
- Delay in diagnosis
- Avoidable hospital admission
- Waste of laboratory staff time
- Delay to processing other samples
- Waste of NHS money

Why was my sample rejected?

The most common reasons for sample rejection are

- ✗ Incorrect container (36.7%)
- ✗ Insufficient clinical details (26.5%)
- ✗ Specimen unlabelled (12.3%)
- ✗ Insufficient sample (9.5%)
- ✗ Insufficient patient identifiers (10.8%)
- ✗ No specimen received (2.6%)
- ✗ Specimen received leaking (1.9%)

How can I avoid samples being rejected?

- ✓ Is it in the correct container?
- ✓ Is it labelled with at least 3 patient identifiers on both container and request form?
- ✓ Do patient identifiers on container and request form match?
- ✓ Have you provided details as to why you need this investigation?
- ✓ Is the container lid secure?

Input from CCGs and GPs

A clinical reference group comprising representatives from each CCG along with pathology directors from the four historical departments meet under the chair of Dr Jonathan Odum, Medical Director, RWH on a monthly basis. CCG representatives on the BCPS Clinical Reference Group, are:

Dr Salma Reehana
Wolverhampton CCG

Dr Raj Mohan
Walsall CCG

Dr Chander Shekhar
Walsall CCG

Dr Ian Sykes
Sandwell & West Birmingham CCG

Dr Anna Onabulu
Cannock CCG

Dr Gary Free
Cannock CCG

GP transport and phlebotomy

Black Country Pathology Services recognises that in recent years General Practice has come under increasing pressure to satisfy demand for more local and accessible diagnostic services.

In collaboration with GP practices and clinics across the Black Country we help support approximately 47,000 weekly (5 minute) phlebotomy clinic slots, from over 350 GP practices and 21 phlebotomy walk-in centres. The Black Country Pathology service supports over 1.7m patients and process over 60,000,000 million specimens every year.

"Our combined fleet travel on average is 550,000 miles every year collecting specimens. The distance to the moon and back is 238,555 miles, so we complete the equivalent of 2.3 trips to and from the moon each year!"

Key to all of this are the transport and phlebotomy teams making sure that patients' specimens are safely collected and delivered promptly to the laboratory for processing.

As your diagnostics partner, we recognise that we need to constantly strive to improve how transport and phlebotomy are delivered, over the next 6 months we are introducing a transport improvement programme in readiness for our full network go-live in March 2021.

Our first project is underway in Dudley, where optimising the transport service will allow for an additional 27,000 phlebotomy clinic slots each year at GP practices. We will be providing further updates over the coming months and look forward to working with you and your teams to improve patient access to diagnostic services across the region.

For further information or to request a customer experience visit or to leave feedback please email us at info@bcpathology.org.uk

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Communication with primary care

Presently at local level you will not see much noticeable change. However, we are very keen to ensure that communication channels with all our users are optimised.

To help with this, we have extended the use of a feedback postcard. The postcard gives the chance to comment on things you feel are already good about our services. For areas that you feel we need to concentrate on to improve then you can let us know. The postcards are freely available to GP practices and there is also a web based card that can be downloaded from the internet at www.bcpathology.org.uk.

When the postcard is returned to us it enters our quality system and we ensure that an appropriate person looks at the comments and replies to you individually.



IT moving forward...

We are proud to announce that The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust West Midlands Cytology and BCPS Histology Services are now successfully live on the new WinPath Enterprise Laboratory Management System.

This change has no effect on GPs who use our systems for electronic requesting and reporting. We shall keep you updated with progress to go live for other Pathology disciplines which is expected in the first quarter of 2020.

This is a huge step towards the success of BCPS and showcases the effective and professional partnership in the provision of best pathology service for our patients.



NHS Pathology Serving the Black Country

General Enquiries: info@bcpathology.org.uk | 0121 507 5348 | www.bcpathology.org.uk

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Provided by Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust.