

## The new South West London Pathology partnership operating from 1 April 2014

In September 2013 Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and St George's Healthcare NHS Trust agreed to form a partnership that will deliver a single, integrated, high quality, NHS led pathology service to hospitals and GPs across South West London. The new partnership will bring together the best of each Trust's current pathology services and provide them in a coordinated and streamlined way. This will include shared patient data and will reduce the need for patients to have the same repeated tests at different Hospital sites in SW London. The new partnership will be called 'South West London Pathology' (SWLP).

The new service will be a 'hub and spoke' model with the hub located at St George's and smaller spoke laboratories at Kingston and Croydon. The majority of services will be provided from the main hub whilst Clinical Blood Sciences services (Biochemistry, Haematology and Blood Transfusion) will also be retained on the Spoke sites to ensure that essential clinical services such as A&E, theatres and obstetrics continue to receive the same level of pathology support. It will also enable local knowledge and clinical expertise to be retained within each Trust, but the whole partnership will benefit from the larger scale and improved technology that can be provided through the establishment of a 'hub' laboratory. This model follows the good practice recommended in Lord Carter's report on the future of NHS pathology services and in subsequent reports. The SWLP partner Trusts have all agreed that continuing to run standalone pathology services within each individual Trust is not sustainable over the longer term.

The new partnership will begin officially operating from 1 April 2014 with Gynaecology Cytology being the first speciality to fully move to the hub at St George's. Users of this service will see no immediate change, with local Trust courier services still picking up samples as normal and samples can still be delivered to their local Trust. These samples will be then be transferred to St Georges for processing and testing. Turnaround Times will not be affected as additional courier services between the spoke sites and St George's will be put in place. The main difference for users is that results will now be sent from St Georges. GP practice systems will have to be modified to receive results from St Georges, whilst being able to receive other results from either Kingston or Croydon laboratories. Instructions on how to ensure this can happen will be provided at a time nearer to date of transfer.

The plan is for the remaining services, Microbiology and Blood Sciences to transfer to St George's by the end of 2014. Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust will continue to provide a local Histopathology and Non Gynaecology service, so requesting and result receipt will remain unchanged for those users who commission these services from Kingston laboratories

The following pathology services are not included in the new SWLP partnership and will remain with each of the three sites:

- Phlebotomy
- Infection control
- Anti-coagulation
- Mortuary
- Andrology
- Non-gynae cytology and histopathology at Kingston
- Clinical Genetics

The Clinical Director for the implementation programme is St George's Consultant Microbiologist Aodhan Breathnach, the Pathology General Manager is Andy Anderson – Pathology Services Manager at Kingston and the Implementation Programme Director is Fiona Ashworth. They are overseeing the work to bring together the three pathology teams, IT, clinical harmonisation and logistics.

There will continue to be regular updates on progress and full details of services provided. During the transition period we will do our best to ensure that we minimise any changes to how we deliver pathology services to you and you should not see any changes to the service provided.