


The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Pathology Consortium Project

Basingstoke and North Hampshire 
NHS Foundation Trust




Isle of Wight

Portsmouth Hospitals 
NHS Trust

Southampton 
University Hospitals NHS Trust

Winchester and Eastleigh 
Healthcare NHS Trust

Introduction

The current Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) agenda has been a major catalyst to this work, given that Nationally the NHS has to find £20bn of savings over the next four years. Pathology Modernisation is a national QIPP work stream that is aiming to save £500m. This is a considerable challenge and one which will require new thinking, radical change and determination to succeed whilst ensuring we maintain and where we can, improve the quality to our customers – the patient, the GP and the commissioners or clients of our pathology services.

There is an opportunity to reconfigure pathology services in Hampshire and Isle of Wight that produces a high quality service at a lower cost whilst continuing to foster the highest professional standards and deliver sustainable career pathways.

Vision

“To have a high quality, cost effective and efficient pathology service which comprises a consortium of NHS laboratories which will change their services to reduce costs of provision by 25% by 2013/14 to the benefit of all Trusts. The consortium will develop effective service models, logistics, IT and monitoring services, with or without third party involvement, to offer different products and services to our customers, attracting further business opportunities which will be shared for the mutual benefit of our partners in the consortium”.

- ***Single organisation***
- ***Single management team***
- ***Single income and expenditure account***
- ***Existing profits maintained***
- ***Sharing of benefits***

Progress so far

Task & finish groups for the major areas, Blood Sciences, Cellular Pathology and Microbiology have been set up to provide local and expert knowledge of each discipline and produce options for the future configuration of the Consortium. A project development group has also been set up consisting of the pathology managers from all organisations. This group is looking at the key areas of quality & governance, logistics, information technology, workforce and commissioning.

Workshops were held in May to appraise configuration options and determine which options would be taken forward for further work. Criteria were defined in the areas of Quality, Finance, Sustainability and Operations and options were assessed against these criteria. The preferred options selected for further work are:

- Cellular Pathology - A single virtual laboratory – centralisation of processing to a single site with consultants remaining on local sites for cut-up, reporting and MDT meetings.
- Microbiology - Centralisation of laboratory services to two hospital sites. Infection control is excluded and remains on all local sites.

- Blood Sciences - One or two hub laboratories for GP work and one or two specialist laboratories. The GP and specialist laboratories could be on one site. Other sites to have 24/7 essential services laboratories to service local clinical need.

In July 2011 an interim report on progress of the project was presented to trust boards and/or executive teams and was well received and approval for the project progress has been given. During July the project was formally reviewed through The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway Process. The project was graded as amber and five recommendations were made. We are now in the process of implementing the recommendations.

Next Steps

During phase two of the project we expect to:

- Hold further workshops will to decide the staffing requirements and configuration for each of the preferred options.
- Identify the estate needs and geography of the consortium in terms of local laboratories, hubs, specialist laboratories and processing centres
- Appraise the options for a future management structure for the consortium
- Look at options for reconfiguring the pathology computing and associated IT systems such as order communications
- Draw up options on how samples may be transported between hospitals and from primary care to hub laboratories

It is expected that an outline business case will be available for trust boards and executive groups by December 2011.

Dr John Wood
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H&loW Pathology Consortium Project

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