
Pathology services partnership goes live

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The Partnership is a joint venture between CUH and five other NHS Trusts in the East of England and will transform and modernise pathology services for hospitals and GP practices, initially across Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire.

The Pathology Partnership has over 800 staff working across 15 locations in the East of England. Staff are employed by CUH, the host Trust. The microbiology staff will be based at the hubs in Cambridge and Ipswich and are employed by Public Health England.

Each hospital within the Partnership has an on-site pathology service focusing on promptly turning round critical tests for patients in their own hospitals.

The laboratories will operate on a hub and satellite model. Non-urgent GP testing will be consolidated at the hub laboratories in Cambridge and Ipswich. Smaller satellite laboratories will operate from the other locations within the Partnership and will focus on fast turnaround on critical tests for their own inpatients.

This model of working allows the service to be more responsive to the requirements of hospitals and GPs.

Steve Joyce, chief executive of the new Partnership said: "We have formed this new Partnership to consolidate and modernise NHS pathology services. By combining expertise and standardising best practice across our different laboratories, we will be able to improve our service for the benefit of patients. Together we can work more efficiently and be able to grasp opportunities to innovate and improve."

Dr Keith McNeil, chief executive of CUH, said: "Patients right across the region will get excellent and safe pathology services, including faster test results, with the modernisation of services.

"CUH is one of the main 'hubs' of the Partnership and is well-placed to make this Partnership a success. As well as being geographically central for GP work, CUH already provides all aspects of pathology services and our site is large enough to accommodate the additional staff and services that will be required."

The Pathology Partnership is following best practice recommendations set out in the Carter

Report on Pathology 2008.

Steve Joyce continued: "We have over 800 staff in our Partnership operating from 12 different locations and this hub and satellite model of working allows the service to be more responsive to the requirements of hospitals and GPs. It will also enable us to invest in new technologies and in the development of our own employees."

The six trusts are

- Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust
- East & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust
- Hinchingsbrooke Healthcare Trust
- Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust
- West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust