

Issues impacting on the quality of the Pathology service provided to Leeds and Bradford GPs in the past 12 months

There have been a number of challenges in the Pathology CSU this year at LTHT and we recognise that the Pathology service provided to Leeds and Bradford GPs hasn't consistently met the standards which we aspire to. To expand on some of the challenges, a brief summary is indicated below:

Bradford Hospitals Trust (BTHFT) transfer of services to a joint venture

BTHFT gave LTHT notice of its intention to seek an alternative provider of Pathology services in late 2015 and subsequently entered into a joint venture with the Airedale Hospital FT. LTHT withdrew from the BRI site in early January 2017 and BTHFT has since transferred almost all services to the joint venture. Our withdrawal from BTHFT highlighted a large number of historical arrangements with GPs and other providers, particularly around specimen collections and consumables deliveries which took some time to resolve. There have been numerous instances of results being delayed and samples lost due to their being collected in error by BTHFT and held at BRI. There have been issues with access to and the uptake of the Leeds ICE system. LTHT has worked with the Bradford CCGs to consult all the practices that use Leeds Pathology on their preferred specimen collection times and collections are now in place that provides 2 collections at times that are broadly convenient to the practices by our in-house transport, this previously being supported by courier and taxi firms. ICE access has developed and is currently readily available with continued training when required to support each practice.

Telepath outage

The Telepath outage in September 2016 had a huge impact on Pathology's ability to deliver a service to LTHT, the primary care community and to our many other external users. The loss of Telepath reduced most laboratories' capacity to a small fraction of their normal level and meant that the capacity that remained was dedicated almost entirely to acute and urgent work from within LTHT. Virtually all GP work was sent to other NHS laboratories for processing. The loss of the IT systems meant that results could not initially be issued electronically and that services had to resort to paper-based reporting. It took several weeks to re-build Telepath, during which time there were undoubted delays in issuing results and difficulties in accessing results electronically. Microbiology was particularly affected with some core elements being corrupted requiring certain aspects to be re-developed. Pathology now has a more robust continuity plan which is currently being formalised with an external provider.

New managed service contract with Siemens

The entire Blood Sciences laboratory at the LGI has been replaced and upgraded as part of our managed service contract with Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics. The new laboratory became operational in early 2016 and is one of the largest and most complex in the UK. There have been considerable challenges as would be expected with the complexity of introducing new kit which have taken time to resolve and it is acknowledged that this has occasionally affected certain aspects such as sample turnaround times, however we are continuing to work through and fine tune the final elements of the implementation process.

In order to maintain the high quality Direct Access service to all GP practices using the Pathology services within LTHT, a process for managing queries &/or issues encountered has been agreed.