



An NHS partnership providing a highly dependable, clinically assured and cost effective diagnostic pathology service



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WELCOME

South West London Pathology (SWLP) celebrated its second year of operation in April 2016. We are now operating as a single, integrated pathology service across south west London. We are currently in a period of stabilisation and are embedding the new service configurations.

Keeping you informed and up to date on any new tests, service developments and events is important to us. We will do this by sending this pathology newsletter to you on a quarterly basis.

We hope you will find this informative and useful. If you have any feedback you can contact us at: stgh-tr.SWLPcomms@nhs.net

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- Microbiology
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- Clinical Blood Sciences

Contact details for each service

How To Contact Us:

If you have any queries regarding any aspect of our service please contact us at the following email address:

stgh-tr.SWLPcomms@nhs.net

If you're contacting us about a missing result please provide the following information so we can investigate the issue for you:

1. The patient's NHS number
2. Date the sample was ordered
3. Name of the test ordered
4. Which service area (Microbiology, Clinical Blood Sciences, Cellular Pathology)
5. Which practice you are from

We receive thousands of samples every day so providing this information will help us resolve the issue as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Jennifer Owen, Head of Operations, also attends CCG and practice manager meetings to receive feedback, discuss and disseminate information regarding our services.

Results and clinical advice contact details are on page 5.

Planned developments during 2016

The main planned developments over the next few months include:

- Sample acceptance criteria
- Standardised manual/offline request forms
- Further development of our website www.swlpath.nhs.uk
- New system for the ordering of GP supplies

www.swlpath.nhs.uk

We also have a website. It's updated regularly and has information on service and test changes. If there's anything you would like to see added to the site let us know.

SUMMARY OF TRANSITION TO NEW COURIER RUNS

In April 2016 we completed the transition to new courier routes for all sites bringing all samples directly to the hub laboratories at St Georges.

With over 250 individual sites to liaise with and over 20 hospital departments to meet with, the introduction of the new runs has been a complex and intricate process.

SWLP has invested additional resources into the GP runs. There are now 13 dedicated vehicles for the GP sites, 3 for the community/outreach sites and 2 for shuttles between the partner trusts.

Our aim is simple - to ensure the pathology samples arrive at the laboratory in a timely, safe manner and to ensure the post and community services receive the required services. The main reasons for the change are:

- Increasing frequency of collections
- Reduced number of requests for repeat blood tests
- Increased reliability of meeting collection times
- Reducing the overall time taken for transport of samples to the hub

The new runs shorten the transit time by up to 31% compared to the previous runs.

The benefit of the new runs is that they have separated the non-pathology tasks and collections for each partner trust with the Pathology and internal tasks for every surgery. The increased frequency of collections and regular drop off to the hub will ensure that the transit time is within acceptable limits.

SWLP will continue to monitor and review the courier runs as we receive feedback and also to accommodate requests for additional collections.

The table below gives a summary of the current position in relation to the new runs:

Runs, Sites and Collections	Old runs	New runs
Number of runs	14	18
Number of sites	256	285
Number of collections	473	603
Sites with 5 or more collections	14	7
Sites with 4 or more collections	6	8
Sites with 3 or more collections	20	38
Sites with 2 or more collections	43	245
Sites with 1 collection	173	64

INTERNAL MAIL

SWLP is providing a temporary base for ERS Medical, our courier partner, until they move into their new base in Mitcham. At the new site ERS Medical will have a dedicated post room. This will ensure that incoming and outgoing internal mail for GP surgeries will be sorted and forwarded onto the appropriate run offering a next working day service.

TRANSPORT ISSUES

If you need to escalate any matters in relation to the current courier service then please continue to use the following number : **020 8266 6510** (from 8am – 8pm).

GP CONSUMABLES

ERS Medical will also oversee the receipt of orders for GP supplies and consumables from all locations, including preparing and dispatching all materials. The ordering of Cytology specimen pots has already been centralised to St George's and once the new ERS Medical base in Mitcham is operational the whole of this process will be standardised and centralised.

SWLP will introduce a new electronic system for ordering supplies to a single contact point. Once we are ready to go live with the new system we will contact you to let you know what you need to do. In the meantime please continue to order your supplies through your current system:

- Croydon – fax 0208 401 3189
- Kingston – fax 0208 934 3289
- St George's – email pathology.consumables@stgeorges.nhs.uk

New Red-Top Boric Acid Containers for Urine Microscopy/Culture

The specimen containers used for urine microbiology culture are changing. The new specimen containers include boric acid preservative which helps to maintain the microbiological quality of the specimen and prevents overgrowth of organisms during transport to the lab. The decision to move to boric acid containers is based on improving the quality of the test results.

Supply of the new containers

The new boric acid containers will be supplied by SWLP as current stocks run-out. The new boric acid containers are for routine microbiology urine MC&S analysis only. The new containers are 10ml size, with a red screw lid and a small amount of white boric acid powder in the bottom.

The schedule for this is currently as follows:

- **Kingston GPs** - new supplies will be delivered on Friday 29 April by ERS Medical.
- **Croydon GPs and St George's GPs** - exact date is to be confirmed.

There is also a urine collection instruction leaflet available at www.swlpath.nhs.uk

Dip-Stick Testing:

It is common and good practice for plain universal containers to be used for dip-stick testing (leucocytes, protein etc.). Please check whether the dip-stick product you use is compatible with urine containing boric acid. The vast majority of dip-stick products are fully compatible.

You should continue to use plain 30 ml universal containers (white cap) for:

- Paediatric urines
- Urines for Legionella/pneumococcal antigen testing
- Chlamydia testing if appropriate
- Sterile fluids, pus, tissue specimens for culture
- Urines for virology (CMV or BK virus PCR)
- Other pathology tests where appropriate

New collection devices for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea tests

Microbiology is now rolling out the next generation of molecular equipment paving the way for improved diagnostic testing.

The Cobas® 4800 CT/NG test uses real-time PCR to test Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea simultaneously in the same sample, with highly accurate results, rapid turnaround time, and minimal hands-on time.

Supply of the new containers

As with most platform changes to the collection devices associated with the new equipment need to be supplied to our end users as well as removing the existing devices.

The schedule for this is currently as follows:

- **Kingston GPs** - on Friday 29 April old supplies will be collected and new supplies will be delivered by ERS Medical. The new service will begin on Tuesday 3 May 2016. After the 3 May no old containers will be accepted. There is also a urine and vaginal collection instruction leaflet available at www.swlpath.nhs.uk
- **Croydon GPs and St George's GPs**— exact date to be confirmed but in the next few weeks.

The test has unique quality control measures built in to ensure confidence in patient results reported.

The Cobas® 4800 CT/NG test:

- Reduces the risk of false positive results with the AmpErase enzyme. The enzyme destroys previously generated amplicon, eliminating the need to use bleach and greatly reducing maintenance time.
- Uses an internal control to minimize false negative results due to inhibition.
- Delivers robust performance with accurate detection of two independent CT DNA targets and two highly conserved NG DNA sequence variations.
- Provides clear, unambiguous results with no grey zone with analysis by a proprietary kinetic algorithm.
- Adds to the expanded STI test menu on the Cobas® 4800 System, which also includes Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) testing.



CELLULAR PATHOLOGY

New Consultant Staff in Cellular Pathology

Over the past few months a number of staff have retired and a other consultants have moved to pastures new. Due to the increase in workload new consultant posts are also being created.

In the past two years Cathy Corbishley, Syamala Thomas, Alastair Deery, Caroline Finlayson, Ruth Nash and Phil Wilson retired. Jade Chow has taken up a Professorship in Kuala Lumpur and Ramzi Rajab and (shortly) Hari Krishnan will relocate within the UK.

We are actively recruiting, looking for new colleagues in quite a difficult market as cellular pathology is a 'shortage' specialty. Despite this situation we have recruited some excellent new colleagues: Kavita Amarasinghe, Jayson Wang, Charan Kaur, Rukma Doshi and most recently Caitlin Beggan. Further interviews are being held shortly. We continue to attract candidates of high calibre and are optimistic that we will be able to recruit substantively.

Meanwhile, we have some experienced consultant locums in post who are supporting us in continuing to deliver the service.

Ordering Cytology Supplies

From Friday **29 April 2016**, the distribution of **cytology** supplies for GPs based in Kingston and Richmond will change and the following process should be used.

All stock requests for **cytology** should be emailed to: stgh-tr.SWLPsupplies@nhs.net

This email address will be monitored on a daily basis so we can respond quickly and efficiently to your request. However, please make sure you monitor your own stock levels regularly and advise cytology as soon as your stock levels are low.

When sending requests for **cytology** consumables please provide the following information:

1. The name of your GP practice
2. Details on the quantity required of the following items:
 - ⇒ ThinPrep® Kits (include vial, brushes, specimen bags and request cards)
 - ⇒ ThinPrep® vial only
 - ⇒ Cervex brush
 - ⇒ Request card
 - ⇒ Specimen bag

Cytology supplies will be packaged and distributed from the hub laboratory based at St George's. Please continue to order all other supplies as you currently do now.

CLINICAL BLOOD SCIENCES

High Potassium Results

Delayed sample receipt and separation are the commonest causes of hyperkalaemia. At SWLP the rates of hyperkalemia are monitored on a weekly basis. The move to the new courier runs has reduced transit times to the lab and together with changes in the way in which samples are processed has resulted in an improvement in the rate of artefactually raised potassium levels. We will continue to monitor the rates of hyperkalaemia. It is essential that the date and time of when the blood sample is taken is put on the tube to prevent erroneous potassium levels being reported.

It is also worth considering other artefactual causes of high potassium levels. These include potassium EDTA contamination which is usually identified during analysis and reported as such. Also high blood levels of

white cells and platelets leak potassium during the clotting process in a serum sample. If the latter is suspected a plasma sample (lithium heparin) can be sent to the lab for urgent analysis. Difficult venesection and fist clenching are also factors that may contribute to a high potassium level.

To check a raised potassium level we recommend sending the patient for phlebotomy at the local hospital and having the sample processed on site to minimise any delays. **This needs to be highlighted very clearly on the request form** and it is probably worth asking the patient to ensure this is communicated to phlebotomy.

Further reading can be found at the following links:

- Smellie WSA. Cases in primary care laboratory medicine: spurious hyperkalaemia. BMJ 2007; 334:693-695.
- <http://pulse-learning.co.uk/clinical-modules/gastroenterology/six-o-clock-blood-hyperkalaemia>

Results and clinical advice contact numbers - APRIL 2016

KINGSTON

Clinical advice is still available from your local consultant at Kingston

Service	Results line	Clinical advice	Fax number
Biochemistry	020 8934 2029 / 2031	020 8934 2056/3292/2057/3309	020 8934 3289
Immunology	020 8725 0025	020 8725 5106	
Haematology	020 8934 2029 / 2031	Kingston switchboard 020 8546 7711 and ask for duty consultant	020 8934 3289
Microbiology	020 8725 5693	Kingston switchboard 020 8546 7711 and ask for duty consultant	Please check for electronic results BEFORE requesting them by fax.
Gynaecology Cytology	020 8725 5266	020 8725 5266	
* Histology/ Non gynae cytology (NOT PART OF SWLP)	020 8934 2239	020 8934 2239	020 8934 3288

CROYDON

Clinical advice is still available from your local consultant at Croydon

Service	Results line	Clinical advice
Biochemistry	020 8401 4067	020 8401 3024/4064/3548
Haematology	020 8401 4071	Please contact 0208 401 3026 and ask to speak to a consultant on call.
Microbiology	020 8725 5693	020 8401 3421/3383
Gynaecology Cytology	020 8725 5266	020 8725 5266
Immunology	020 8725 0025	020 8725 5106

ST GEORGE'S

Service:	Results line	Clinical advice
Biochemistry	020 8672 1255—please phone switchboard and ask for the service you require.	
Haematology		
Microbiology	020 8725 5693	020 8672 1255—please phone switchboard and ask for the service you require.
Cellular Pathology	020 8725 5266	020 8725 5266
Immunology	020 8725 0025	020 8725 5106