



Bringing together local pathology services

The integration of Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust Pathology Services into Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services

November 2021

Welcome

Pathology represents the cornerstone of patient care. It sits at the core of an integrated health system, supporting every aspect of healthcare. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on how fundamental pathology is to our everyday lives. It has allowed people to emerge from restrictions, to see loved ones and to help businesses reopen.

Local healthcare providers – and their patients – rely on the expertise, facilities, technology and solutions provided by their pathology providers. As more people live longer with more complex health needs, demand for healthcare services increases. Healthcare systems are adapting to help meet this demand – and larger, joined-up networks of pathology services are needed to improve resilience, responsiveness and efficiency while also continually maintaining quality and clinical safety standards.

More and more pathology service providers across the UK are joining forces. Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services (BSPS) was one of the first NHS pathology networks to emerge; it is rooted in a cooperation between two NHS Foundation Trusts in 1998. It is now one of the largest NHS pathology providers in the country – and is a contractual joint venture between a number of NHS Trusts that now includes pathology services provided by Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (SASH).

This document provides more information on the integration of SASH pathology services with BSPS – including what it means for staff, service users and patients. If you have any questions about any of the changes, please email fhft.bsps-sashintegration@nhs.net and we will respond to you.

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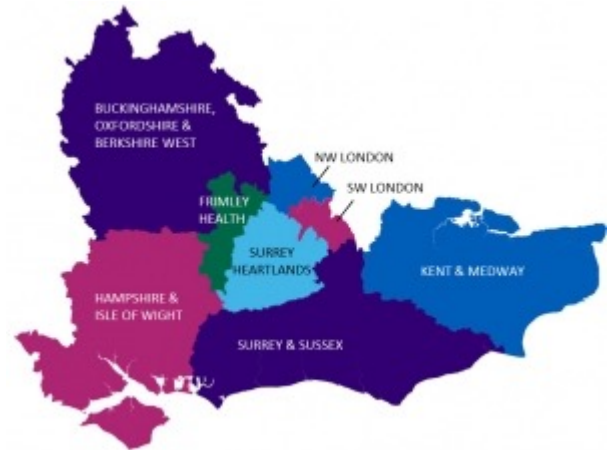
1. Background

Frontier pathology network

SASH was previously a partner in the Frontier pathology network with Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust. The national policy on networks resulted in NHS England designating Frontier into South 7, which also included East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. At this time, these four Trusts were incorporated into the Sussex and East Surrey STP (Sustainability and Transformation Programme).

The Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership

However, a recent restructuring of the Surrey Heartlands integrated care system (ICS) – known as the Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership – resulted in SASH now also being part of Surrey Heartlands, which has all of its pathology provided by BPS. In addition, SASH has the Royal Surrey County Hospital as its main cancer centre. These factors led to consideration of SASH integrating with BPS. Following the evaluation of a full business case by SASH’s Board and the Boards of the existing BPS Partner Trusts, this integration was approved.



Strengthening local pathology services

The collaboration – which has now been formalised – means BPS is now the largest pathology provider in the country. It increases the resilience of our pathology services and also means that SASH pathology services are joining a single managed UKAS-accredited pathology service for the entire Surrey Heartlands ICS with end-to-end IT connectivity across the whole area.

As a single organisation, we will benefit from shared knowledge and expertise, as well as increased resilience and buying power. The eventual cost savings, once reorganisation is complete, will be reinvested in our services.

Integrating the two pathology services will also mean:

- Greater professional training opportunities for staff, based on the Investors in People model and linked to organisational objectives
- Improved quality standards with an increased pool of consultant expertise across sites
- Rapid introduction of new technologies and techniques to benefit clinicians and patients – as well as pathology staff with more regular access to new techniques and technology
- Faster turnaround times, including more collections for GPs (a minimum of two and a maximum of four runs per day) and hourly shuttles between hub sites, providing quicker and more accurate results for patients
- Enhanced and expanded rapid testing on Acute Trust sites and extensive rapid testing to support diagnostic hubs, NHS Trusts, GPs, community centres and other health service providers



Continued

- Consolidated logistics, including a joined-up dedicated Pathology transport service to transfer specimens safely between laboratories as well as end-to-end IT connectivity that will speed up results
- The expansion of a larger, more resilient organisation that can 'do things once' – from procurement to best practice and investment – for the benefit of all Acute Trusts served by it
- A single fully integrated pathology service across all partner Trust providers with the most up-to-date IT, which is in direct strategic alignment with its Integrated Care Systems
- Integration with larger national and regional pathology services including NHS England bowel and cervical cancer screening and PCR testing of COVID-19 swab samples
- Integrated Clinical Governance and Quality through a larger, joined-up UKAS accredited service
- Significant economies of scale, reducing costs and reinvesting savings into the NHS, while creating significant opportunities for growth in a changing environment of fewer, larger Pathology networks

2. Ways of working and consultation

What this means for current ways of working

The collaboration means there will be changes to the senior management structure for SASH pathology departments, as SASH pathology services are now formally part of the BSPS network. This will include some changes to reporting frameworks and ways of working to facilitate the integration and joined-up systems, which will ultimately deliver faster turnaround times for service users and patients.

Consultation with staff

Some members of staff will be more directly affected. This includes staff in services where it is proposed that work will transfer from SASH sites to other BSPS locations, in addition to those who would be affected by minor changes to job descriptions (including harmonisation across the network), responsibilities and direct reporting arrangements. A consultation process with individual employees who are directly affected and with the Trusts' Trade Unions is taking place from 1 November 2021 – 30 November 2021.

3. Key timescales

A phased approach to service changes

It is intended that all SASH services will be integrated into the BPS unitary management structure from 13 December 2021.

Routine acute work will continue on SASH Acute Trust sites, which will include enhanced and expanded rapid molecular testing on site.

It is proposed that some services will change location in planned phases during 2022. The phased approach will help us all to continue delivering our business as usual whilst we become acquainted with new technology, systems, sites and ways of working. Subject to consultation, we expect services to integrate with the BPS pathology networks as follows:

- Microbiology services currently provided at Crawley Hospital will transfer to Frimley Park Hospital in January 2022
- Immunology and virology work, currently 'sent away' to Royal Sussex County Hospital, will be processed at St Peter's Hospital from January 2022
- Around 50% of SASH Blood Sciences work (which is GP-derived activity) will move to Frimley Park Hospital in June 2022
- The majority of SASH Cellular Pathology work will move to Royal Surrey County Hospital in September 2022

The BPS pathology network

BPS is currently one of the largest pathology networks in the country, providing safe, high quality, clinically led diagnostics. The NHS-led pathology network is a joint venture between five NHS Trusts: Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust, Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust; and now Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust.

Last year – before SASH's inclusion – the service delivered more than 50 million tests supported by 1000 WTE staff working across the network. The integration of SASH to form a new and expanded BPS pathology network offers an exciting opportunity to enhance all of our pathology services, expand the service offering over time and deliver high-quality results using the latest technology. The integration will provide access to industry-leading diagnostic equipment and a wider range of clinical specialties and research opportunities that are available in a larger pathology network.

SASH has joined BPS alongside the four existing NHS Trusts, expanding one of England's 29 pathology networks approved by NHS England/NHS Improvement. This will mean that SASH's pathology service will move from Network South 7 into Network South 5 (BPS is NS5). By integrating SASH pathology services with the BPS pathology network, BPS will have overall accountability and responsibility for the delivery and management of pathology services delivered on SASH sites.

4. BSPS Unitary Management Structure and Governance Arrangements

BSPS operates a single integrated governance and management structure across its partner Trusts, with a unified budgetary framework. The network's governance arrangements reflect a partnership of equals, supported by Board level agreements to share risks and benefits, including investment and income.

The BSPS board

The BSPS Board has responsibility for ensuring provision of pathology services in accordance with the governance standards of each partner Trust. Prior to the integration of SASH, its membership comprised the Chief Executive Officers and Finance Directors of the four partner Trusts, in addition to the BSPS Managing Director, Finance and Commercial Lead, Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Governance, Quality and Service Improvement Lead and Medical Director.

The BSPS Senior Executive

The BSPS Managing Director leads the BSPS Senior Executive, which also includes the Finance and Commercial Lead, Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Governance, Quality and Service Improvement Lead and Medical Director. The BSPS Managing Director has overall responsibility for the services provided across BSPS and has delegated specific duties to competent clinical and management personnel to ensure compliance with the expected standards.

The BSPS Executive

The BSPS Executive comprises of the Senior Executive Team, Associate Medical Directors, Clinical Leads for each pathology specialty, General Managers, Chief Clinical Information Officer, Chief Information Officer and Head of HR for BSPS. The BSPS Executive has operational and strategic responsibility for the pathology services provided by BSPS and will be accountable for all aspects of the service.

Employment Arrangements and Licence to Practice Agreement

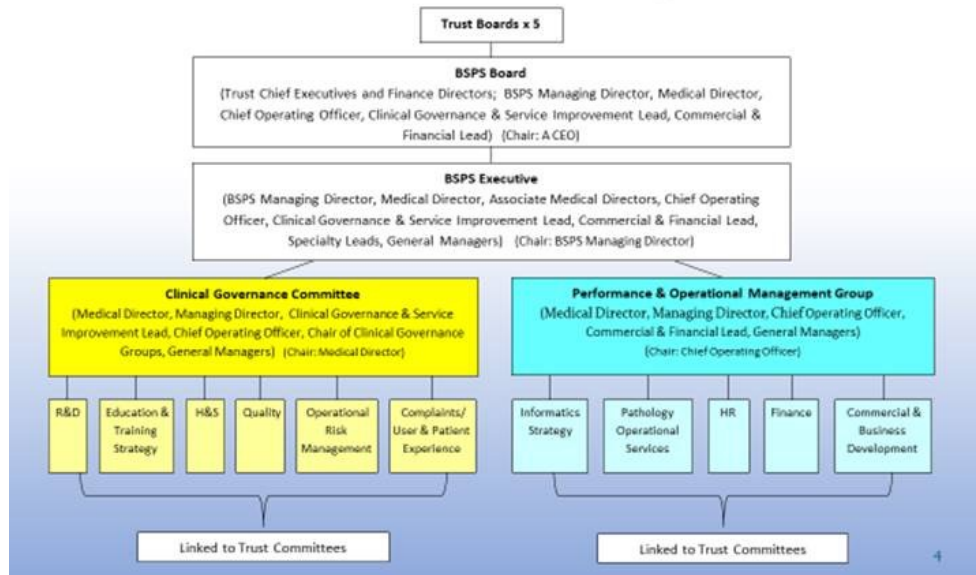
BSPS's Partner Trusts are the legal employers of staff working for the network. Staff are typically employed by the Trust at which they spend the majority of their working time.

BSPS staff are employed on the terms and conditions of their employing Trust.

BSPS's unitary management structure means that an employee's direct line manager and/or senior management team may be employed by a different partner Trust. However, a Licence to Practice Agreement exists between all partner Trusts, which allows network staff to work across all BSPS sites and to be integrated into the BSPS management structure.

Each partner Trust has an HR lead for BSPS, at Business Partner or equivalent level, to oversee workforce matters relating specifically to BSPS staff employed by their Trust. Support is also provided via other Trust based colleagues in transactional workforce services including recruitment, payroll and workforce information.

BSPS Governance Arrangements



5. Integration of SASH Pathology into the BSPS Unitary Management and Governance Structure

Expansion of the BSPS Board

As a result of the integration of SASH into BSPS, SASH's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer have joined the BSPS Board. SASH will be an equal (1/5th) partner in deciding the strategic direction of BSPS.

BSPS Senior Executive

The BSPS Senior Executive assumed senior management responsibility for all SASH pathology services from 13 October 2021. There are no plans to amend the membership of this group.

BSPS Executive

Existing and future members of the BSPS Executive will be responsible and accountable for services provided at SASH, as well as the wider BSPS network.

There are two vacant positions within BSPS which involve membership of the BSPS Executive. They are:

- Associate Medical Director - Infection and Immunity
- Clinical Lead for Microbiology

Expressions of interest in these roles will be invited from all eligible BSPS colleagues, including those who have joined the network through the integration of SASH. The successful candidates will join the BSPS Executive.

Medical Workforce and Medical Secretaries

SASH's existing medical workforce will continue to be based at East Surrey Hospital, along with the administrative staff who support them.

BSPS's Associate Medical Directors will take on clinical leadership for services provided at SASH, in addition to the wider network. Local Clinical Leads, where they are appointed, will report into the relevant Associate Medical Director for their specialty.

SASH medical staff will retain their existing Responsible Officer (currently the Medical Director for SASH). This is in line with arrangements for medics at other BSPS partner Trusts. Where necessary and appropriate, BSPS's Medical Director will liaise with SASH in regards to the management of medical staff at SASH. This will include matters such as job planning, contractual matters and any process under the Maintaining High Professional Standards (MHPS) framework.

Some BSPS medical teams operate successful joint on-call rotas, which allow for more robust cover arrangements and reduced on-call frequency for individual team members, particularly in small teams. This may be the subject of further discussion/consultation once integrated service provision is more established.

6. Microbiology

The SASH microbiology service will be integrated into the BSPS Infection and Immunity management structure from 13 December 2021.

Microbiology laboratory services will continue to be performed at Crawley Hospital up to and including 30 January 2022. All Microbiology laboratory services currently performed at Crawley Hospital, will transfer to Frimley Park Hospital from 31 January 2022.

7. Virology and Immunology

SASH Virology and Immunology work is currently delivered at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. From 31 January 2022, this work will be brought in house to BSPS St Peter's Hospital Laboratories.

8. Blood Sciences

From 13 December 2021, Specimen Reception Services at East Surrey, Royal Surrey County, Frimley Park, Wexham Park and Royal Berkshire Hospitals will be integrated into BSPS Blood Sciences. SASH's Blood Sciences Service will also be incorporated into BSPS.

On 13 June 2022, all SASH Blood Sciences General Practitioner (GP) work and specialist testing will transfer to the Frimley Park Hospital hub. This represents approximately 50% of SASH Blood Sciences work. Routine acute work will continue to be performed at East Surrey Hospital in a rapid response laboratory.

9. Support Services

From 13 December 2021, the following changes to BPS Support Services will be introduced:

- **Point of Care testing (POCT):** POCT across BPS, including the service provided at SASH, will be brought into the Support Services management structure from 13 December 2021. There will be no immediate changes to the operation of the Point of Care testing service at SASH, which currently operates as a Rapid Onsite Test Laboratory for COVID-19, Flu and RSV testing. Future plans for the service include producing a business case to adopt the BPS Point of Care testing operational and staffing model.
- **Specimen Reception and Phlebotomy Arrangements:** Specimen Reception services will transfer from Support Services to Blood Sciences from 13 December 2021. Phlebotomy services will remain on site at East Surrey Hospital and will be integrated into BPS's Support Services management structure.
- **SASH Transport Services:** From 13 December 2021, SASH's Pathology Transport service will be integrated into BPS's Support Services Structure. As pathology services transfer from SASH to other BPS sites, as part of the plans for 2022 and beyond, transport routes are expected to adapt accordingly and additional transport staff will be recruited at SASH.

10. Cellular Pathology, including Mortuary Services

SASH Cellular Pathology will be incorporated into the BPS Cellular Pathology structure from 13 December 2021, with the SASH Head of Services for Cellular Pathology reporting directly into BPS's Chief Operating Officer and continuing to manage Cellular Pathology and the Mortuary on the SASH site.

In September 2022, all SASH histology analysis laboratory work will transfer to Royal Surrey County Hospital and all SASH non-gynaecological Cytology work will transfer from East Surrey Hospital to St Peter's Hospital.

From September 2022, the Cellular pathology work remaining at East Surrey Hospital will be Consultant reporting, dissection and andrology work.

SASH's Mortuary service and Bereavement Office will remain on site at East Surrey Hospital. The Mortuary service will be integrated into BPS's Cellular Pathology structure. The Bereavement Office will not be integrated into BPS, but will instead report into SASH's General Manager for Clinical Haematology, within the Cancer and Diagnostics Division.

11. What happens next?

The integration will take place in a planned way over several months and we recognise that periods of change can create uncertainty and concern. We will consult with directly affected staff during November 2021 and we are committed to keeping all colleagues updated throughout the phased changes. Please be aware that support is available through your line manager and your employing Trust's HR team.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact us by emailing fhft.bsps-sashintegration@nhs.net