

Healthier Communities Select Committee		
Title	LGT Pathology Services	
Contributor	Lynn Saunders, Director of Strategy, Business and Communications, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust	Item 6
Class	Part 1 (open)	3 December 2018

## 1. Context

Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust (LGT) has provided the briefing below on the future of LGT Pathology Services. The committee received this briefing as an information-only item at its last meeting. At this meeting, the LGT Director of Strategy, Business and Communications, Lynn Saunders, will be present at the meeting to answer any questions from the committee.

## 2. Recommendation

The committee is recommended to note the contents of the briefing.



## The Future of LGT Pathology Services

### 1. Summary of Background and Current Service Provision across SEL

- (1.1) NHS Improvement have reviewed the national pathology service provision and have advised that it is their intention to establish and implement 29 Pathology Networks across England, each to be run as a hub and spoke model. Nationally all trusts have been advised of the pathology network within which their service is expected to be located. Not surprisingly, the LGT service has been identified as sitting within the South East London network, currently including both Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Trust (GSTT) and Kings College Hospital (KCH) as providers of pathology services.
- (1.2) Within south east London different models currently exist for the provision of pathology services. LGT provides an in-house NHS provided service, including to local primary care (GPs) and to Oxleas Foundation Trust, whilst other providers in the sector (GSTT, KCH and SLAM) all outsource their pathology services to a Joint Venture partnership called Viapath, jointly owned by GSTT

and KCH with Serco as a private sector partner. The Viapath contract expires in 2020.

- (1.3) In January 2018 Trust Boards for all acute providers in south east London were asked to consider a strategic outline case (SOC) setting out the options for the future of pathology services in south east London. The LGT Board approved the recommendations of the SOC, noting its inclusion of an NHS option, and responded to the STP advising that the Board required demonstration that an option to provide an NHS provided pathology service should be given equal consideration and evaluation to any option including the private sector.

## 2. **LGT Position**

- (2.1) South East London STP have established a Pathology Programme Board to progress the development of the options for pathology services and LGT have been involved in that process.
- (2.2) In July, SEL Trust Boards received and considered a paper from the SEL Pathology Programme Board, seeking approval to the issue an OJEU notice, which would launch the procurement process jointly across all participating SEL Trusts for the provision of pathology services.
- (2.3) The LGT Board considered its position at its meeting at the end of July. Whilst SEL were not ruling out an NHS based bid being received in response to the tender process, it seemed quite possible that no NHS based bid would come forward. Based on this, the LGT Board determined that it should not be named specifically in the OJEU notice in order to enable its executive team to pursue the possibility of developing an NHS network model with an alternative NHS pathology provider.
- (2.4) In order not to compromise the SEL procurement process, LGT committed to the SEL Pathology Programme Board that it would take its decision at its meeting in September, on whether to be included within the SEL procurement or to develop an NHS network option with another provider.
- (2.5) At its meeting on 25 September the Board agreed that LGT should develop an NHS option with a neighbouring NHS provider. To reach this decision, the Board considered detailed work by the Trust's pathology steering group, which had reviewed the different options for pathology networks, following detailed discussions with neighbouring NHS trusts, namely Barts Health NHS Trust and South West London Pathology<sup>1</sup>. The LGT pathology steering group includes members of our pathology management team, pathology clinical staff and clinical users of the services.

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<sup>1</sup> South West London Pathology is a partnership formed from the St Georges University Hospitals Foundation Trust, Kingston Hospital Foundation Trust and Croydon Health Services NHS Trust

- (2.6) In taking this decision, the Board recognises the close clinical links between our organisation and the other trusts in South East London, especially the role of GSTT and KCH as specialist (“tertiary”) referral centres for patients (particularly when tests for cancer are needed). We will, of course, continue to work with STP partners and the SEL Pathology Programme Board to ensure that these clinical links are not negatively affected by joining a pathology network outside south east London. When rapid patient diagnosis of pathology samples is needed (for example, for haemato-oncology), we will continue to refer samples to the local tertiary centre in south east London.
- (2.7) LGT will now be carrying out detailed work over the next few months to enable us to make a decision on which pathology network it would be preferable for us to join in the interest of our patients, our scientific and clinical staff who provide our pathology services, and our local GPs. GPs in Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley currently receive their pathology services from LGT and we will also want to talk to CCGs and GPs to ensure that we maintain the important clinical links between local GPs and the local hospital pathology services.

**Lynn Saunders**  
**Director of Strategy, Business and Communications**  
**October 2018**