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Rhaglen Patholeg
Genedlaethol
National Pathology
Programme



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Y Weithrediaeth
Executive

National Pathology Programme Newsletter – April 25

Programme Background

The National Pathology Programme is a strategic body in Wales sitting within the NHS Wales Executive, which is in turn hosted by Public Health Wales. Its remit is to work with Health Boards and Trusts across Wales to support the development of high quality, effective and sustainable pathology services. Priority areas for improvement that are the focus of the National Programme were originally identified in the *Pathology Statement of Intent (2019)* and current work is aligned with the *Diagnostics Recovery and Transformation Strategy for Wales (2023 – 2025)*.

Updates on the key areas of our work

Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance and Regulatory Compliance workstream has been working alongside informatics colleagues from the NHS Wales Executive, to further develop a business intelligence dashboard (link below in Business Intelligence section) capturing performance metrics across Wales. Work also continues with sharing learning and best practice in relation to compliance with ISO 15189:2022 and regulatory requirements (MHRA and HTA).

Business Intelligence

We have recently published two new dashboards designed to improve visibility and understanding of key pathology data across NHS Wales:

- [Cellular Pathology Dashboard](#) – Provides a comprehensive overview of test volumes and turnaround times, offering a clearer picture of demand and laboratory activity. A newly added page supports QS&I in the implementation of Lean methodologies within laboratories across Wales.
- [A&E Blood Test Dashboard](#) – Focuses on key blood tests taken in A&E locations, presenting data on test volumes and turnaround times.

Both dashboards are updated monthly, ensuring that the latest data is available to support informed decision-making at local and national levels. We encourage stakeholders to explore these resources and provide feedback to help refine and enhance their functionality using the form found [here](#).

Looking ahead, we are now focusing on identifying data sources to develop further quality assurance metrics that will inform service planning and development and support both local and national business cases

Digital and Novel Technologies

Since our last edition of the newsletter, the NPP have attended a number of Board meetings within Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (UHB) and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB to support the health boards with the approval process for the Digital Cellular Pathology Business Justification Case. We are delighted to report that both Health Boards have now formally approved the case and Swansea Bay UHB have also approved in principle. The NPP are working with Betsi Cadwaladr UHB in supporting them during their approval process. We are also continuing to prepare for the procurement of a national digital cellular pathology solution.

Through Welsh Government Transformation Funding, we have been able to secure funding to roll-out Ibox's Breast AI solution. Whilst this solution has already been in use in a pilot project in BCUHB, the remaining Health Boards are now in the process of preparing for go-live. Ibox and NPP will carry out a piece of work to identify the benefits which we will share once available.

In addition, the Transformation Funding has also enabled the procurement of a new pan-cancer algorithm which will be deployed in BCUHB. The procurement has been completed and a supplier has been awarded this piece of work. A kick-off meeting has taken place, and the team are working through next steps as part of the implementation phase.

Environmental Sustainability

Work is progressing on the development of the All-Wales Pathology Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool, a critical component in establishing an accurate baseline for sustainability mapping across Wales. Additionally, efforts continue with the National Map of Sustainability Projects, which will provide a comprehensive overview of ongoing initiatives across the pathology network.

A new workstream has also been initiated to review current practices related to pathology reporting post-analysis. This project aims to evaluate the feasibility of reducing reliance on printed reports in favour of more sustainable electronic alternatives, aligning with broader environmental sustainability objectives.

Workforce, Training and Education

Pathology Practice Education Facilitator (PPEFs) - we are pleased to announce that the Programme has had confirmation from the IBMS that it will provide funding for 3 Band 6 PPEFs for 12 months. Pathology Training Leads have been invited to submit Expressions of Interest for hosting the PPEFs – where they will be allocated will be finalised shortly. The PPEFs will work alongside Pathology colleagues in the health boards/trusts and will primarily support staff to develop their pre-registration portfolios, HCS degree students on placement, staff undertaking apprenticeship training and they will also help with outreach work (such as careers fairs) with schools and universities. The work and outcomes from employing the PPEFs will be evidenced and assessed to find out if the role can bring benefits to the training and education within laboratory teams.

Point of Care Testing (PoCT) – the PoCT Managers and Co-Ordinators are working with HEIW to get a new 30 credit level 4 module with a PoCT focus ratified by the education body. The IBMS specialist portfolio for PoCT has been launched (21st March 2025) to help with career pathway development for both scientists and non-scientific professionals.

Limited Scope Reporting BMS training pilot – the pilot is being funded by the Moondance Cancer Initiative. Training is progressing well with 2 trainees in CVUHB, with evidence of the trainees improving turnaround times and having a positive impact on processing the bowel screening workload. The Programme is developing a business case to support the introduction of this reporting BMS (limited scope) role on a permanent basis in health boards.

Online Pathology Academy – thanks to funding from the IBMS, the Programme is in the process of recruiting a Pathology Subject Matter Expert/Pathology Academy Development Manager for 12 months. This person will take forward the work to set up a ‘virtual’ academy for Pathology on the HEIW Y Ty Dysgu platform, working closely with the Pathology service, Training Leads and HEIW Digital.

Recruitment - the Programme via PWEГ has developed a post-recruitment survey. Pathology managers are being asked to help gather information on the training routes of newly appointed BMS staff, which will support future workforce and training planning. In addition, the Programme will shortly be developing a survey for Year 3 HCS and BMS students, to find out their career aspirations and first job destinations. This will help to develop a picture of where HCS and BMS graduates take up employment and will allow the Programme to start to attract more of these graduates to work in NHS Wales Pathology.

Thank you to PWEГ members who supported the Programme in developing the Pathology Overview for the Healthcare Science Career Framework, which will be launched by HEIW shortly.

Good News Stories

Healthcare Science Research and Innovation Group (HCS RIG)

5 year strategy ‘Research and Innovation for Healthcare Science Professionals in NHS Wales’.

[Read it here](#)

Training and Education Opportunities

We are proud of the significant progress made in developing and expanding education and training opportunities within Healthcare Science across Wales. A key milestone has been the introduction of the **Healthcare Science Apprenticeship pathway**, delivered in a collaborative "Once-for-Wales" model. This innovative approach brings together all training leads from NHS Wales, the Welsh Blood Service (WBS), and Public Health Wales (PHW) to ensure consistent, high-quality training across the nation. The pathway includes Level 2, 3, and 4 Diploma qualifications in Healthcare Science, creating accessible entry points and structured progression routes.

In addition, the Pathology Training Lead Group has played a crucial role in launching a **part-time degree programme**. This development enables valued support staff to progress towards becoming Biomedical Scientists, with opportunities to further advance into roles such as Clinical Scientists, Advanced Practitioners, or even Consultant Biomedical Scientists. These initiatives mark a major step forward in workforce development, supporting career progression and strengthening the future of Healthcare Science in Wales.

Focus On - Pathway for the Capsule Sponge

The use of capsule sponge is being rolled out across Wales, following a number of successful pilots. The capsule sponge endoscopy tool has the potential to significantly reduce the workload of pathology departments by offering a minimally invasive, cost-effective alternative to traditional endoscopic biopsies for conditions like reflux and Barrett’s oesophagus. By enabling GPs and other frontline healthcare professionals to collect oesophageal cell samples in a simple outpatient setting, the technology reduces the reliance on endoscopic procedures, which are resource-intensive and require specialised personnel. The collected samples are processed and interpreted by a dedicated central laboratory, shifting the diagnostic workload away from NHS pathology departments. Furthermore, the use of immunohistochemical stains enhances the accuracy of diagnosing dysplasia, ensuring that clinically significant cases are identified efficiently while minimizing unnecessary biopsies.

Information

READY SET GO

The 45th HSJ Awards are now OPEN.



SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 30th MAY 2025

Upcoming Pathology Events

NHS Wales Cancer Network Genomics Education Event

Friday 2nd May 2025

Holiday Inn Cardiff City Centre

Register your attendance
[CLICK HERE.](#)

Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP)/ Malignancy of Unknown Origin (MUO) Education Event 2025

Friday 16th May 2025

Venue Cymru, Llandudno

Register your attendance
[CLICK HERE.](#)

Annual Health Science Conference

Thursday 15th and Friday 16th
May 2025

Venue Cymru, Llandudno

Join the waitlist

[CLICK HERE.](#)

The Programme Updates

A huge congratulations to Jane Long in her promotion to Senior Project Manager. A well-deserved promotion for her hard work and dedication to the programme.

The National Pathology Programme are out on the ROAD..... coming soon to a Health Board near you throughout 2025 visiting Pathology Departments to engage and collaborate with colleagues. The teams starting point will be within the Royal Glamorgan Hospital (Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board), and then we're off to the rest of the Health Boards. See you soon!

Contact us

Please email NHSWHC.National.Pathology.Programmes@wales.nhs.uk if you would like:

- to be added to the circulation list for our newsletter
- to provide feedback or contributions
- opportunities to engage with the work of the Programme

Previous newsletters available via QR code/link:



Next issue – July 2025