



# InSYNC

News and updates on the pathology transformation programme for colleagues and service users

**September 14, 2021**

## Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of In SYNC, the newsletter dedicated to bringing you the very latest updates along our pathology services transformation journey.

In this issue:

- Watch a video all about the [SYNLAB Transformation System \(STS\)](#) and how it will help to deliver the vision for our partnership
- Get to know our [Transformation Leads](#) and learn how they are helping to shape the future of pathology services
- Get up to speed with the latest [transformation highlights](#) in our 'at-a-glance' feature
- Find an update on the transfer of services in [Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham \(BGL\)](#)
- Read about the latest [job opportunities](#) in our partnership

If you have an idea for a story or a suggestion about what you would like to see featured in this newsletter, please email [LetsTalk@viapath.org](mailto:LetsTalk@viapath.org)

## Video: Introducing the SYNLAB Transformation System

By now you'll no doubt have heard a lot about quality improvement and, more specifically, the SYNLAB Transformation System (STS).

STS is a proven methodology which equips, enables and empowers us all to deliver positive and lasting change. It is focused on giving people the ability to diagnose problems and collaboratively design improvements to ensure process efficiency.

Moving forward, it will play a crucial role not only in raising employee satisfaction and delivering better outcomes for service users, but also in ensuring that the ultimate commitments of our pathology partnership are delivered.

Process Improvement Consultant **Calum Clements** is the person responsible for rolling out the STS programme in South East London and, over the coming months, he will be working with our various teams on its implementation.

In this video Calum takes us deeper into the world of STS, providing an insight into how it works, what it will mean for you and how success can be achieved.



Can't view this video? Click [here](#) to view it on Vimeo.

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## In a nutshell: Transformation news at a glance

It can be challenging to keep up to speed with the pace of transformation in a pathology partnership as wide-reaching as ours, but In SYNc is here to help.

Here's a brief round-up of some recent highlights and milestones:

A key part of transformation involves leadership visibility across the organisation, as executives seek to better understand the work that's happening on the ground. CEO **Mark Dollar** recently visited the Newborn Screening team at St Thomas' (see picture right), led by **Rachel Carling**, Director of Newborn Screening & Clinical Lead, Biochemical Sciences, who shared what they have been working on as part of the newborn blood spot screening project in England, which helps to identify severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID). Early diagnosis means treatment for SCID - a bone marrow transplant - is more likely to be successful and the baby spends less time being ill, or in hospital having tests. Well done to everyone involved.



- More than 40 nominations have been received from people keen to become **Change Champions** - a new network of people who will help support colleagues throughout our transformation journey. We hope to be able to confirm our Change Champion network, alongside more information about the role it will play, by the end of September.
- Scott Andrew has been appointed as a dedicated Programme Manager for the delivery of the hub building. His role will entail all aspects of the construction programme up to and including the development and implementation of physical laboratory and office space, as well as the facility's infrastructure. Scott will also be critical in helping us to meet our environmental and sustainability commitments within the building.
- Two weeks remain in the first part of the tender process to appoint **hub contractors**.
- A new workstream group dedicated to the delivery of the partnership's **Target Operating Model (TOM)** is being created. It will focus on genomics, blood sciences, infection sciences, tissue sciences, reference services, support services and logistics. It will be tasked with looking at everything from analytical platforms and quality management systems through to the hub/ESL testing repertoire.
- The second monthly meeting of the **Colleague Engagement Group (CEG)** has taken place, as employee representatives from across the partnership focus in on ensuring effective transformational communications and engagement activities.

Remember, if you have a question to ask you are encouraged to email it to [letstalk@viapath.org](mailto:letstalk@viapath.org) at any time.

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## Gearing up for a smooth and safe transfer of pathology services in Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham

The transfer of pathology services in Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham (BGL) is moving on at pace – thank you to everyone who is working tirelessly to ensure a safe and seamless transition.

With the October 29 go-live date fast approaching, we are focused on making sure all staff are recruited, that policies, equipment and processes are tested and in place, and that those affected - including GP practices - have the information they need.

Significant work has already taken place to increase the capacity of laboratories, including the purchase of new equipment, the review and improvement of processes and the recruitment of all necessary clinical and scientific staff. Sixty per cent of positions have already been filled against the minimum staffing requirements and the recruitment team is now busy onboarding these individuals, with some temporary staff and locums in place to support go-live.

A detailed operation is also underway to road-test IT and ordering systems, secure the logistics surrounding transportation of specimens and the supply of consumables, harmonise the test catalogues and review clinical pathways to minimise any risks.

In line with our commitment to make sure people have the information and support they need, work is ongoing with regard to the set-up and provision of our customer services function. A number of events and communications have been organised to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to raise issues and questions so we can provide the best possible service for services and patients.

This has included a special webinar for BGL GPs, which took place on September 15.

Additionally, a [series of FAQs](#) about the transfer of pathology services has been published on SYNLAB's website and the production of an 'easy guide' to support GPs with the transition is underway.

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## Catching up with our Transformation Leads



Back in June we shared news of the [appointment of three Transformation Leads](#) covering Infection Sciences, Blood Sciences and Tissue Sciences. Their role is to work with multiple stakeholders to help design, develop and deliver an end-to-end service which enables the successful delivery of our pathology programme.

We're pleased to confirm that they have now been joined by a fourth Transformation Lead, **Michelle Holder**, who is leading on behalf of Support Services and Logistics.

While Michelle settles into the role, we caught up with **Darren Costello**, **Fearghal Tucker** and **Khadijah Owusu-Ansah** (pictured) to find out more about some of the transformation projects they are applying their experience and insight to. While they welcome change, they all agreed that it can be a somewhat scary, but exciting, prospect being involved in the 'new world' preparations and it certainly seems they have plenty of plates spinning.

Read on for a taster of their key projects.

**Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham (BGL)** – Viapath will be taking on the testing for most primary and community care services in these areas at the end of October. In this context the Transformation Leads are working to understand the infrastructure, equipment and staffing requirements needed in each of the laboratories which will be taking on the additional workload (some of this work will be undertaken at Pathology First, a partnership between SYNLAB and Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust). The leads are working closely with the operational teams, as well as estates, procurement and recruitment, to help reconfigure the space available so we can bring in and validate new equipment, as well as identify new and existing employees who will need training.

**Target Operating Model (TOM) and the hub** – this is the part of the transformation programme that most people are likely to be interested in at this point in time - and things are beginning to gather pace. Think of the TOM as being our destination, with the Transformation Leads helping to work out the map to get us there. This includes identifying which services need to stay on hospital sites, looking at floor plans for the hub and Essential Services Laboratories (ESLs), identifying technical solutions such as the standardisation of equipment and suppliers, floor layouts and logistics, as well as how processes will work going forward. We'll share more on this as the work progresses.

**Test harmonisation** – Viapath’s testing repertoire is extensive and our Transformation Leads are working closely with the Strategic Clinical Leads and the Epic Beaker team. Quite simply, the aim of this work is to align our tests across all sites. This will include naming conventions, equipment and processes with the objective of providing the same high-quality test wherever it is processed. The leads are also looking to future-proof ensure our operations are fit for purpose by exploring digital pathology and ensuring we consider emerging regulation, for example the CE-IVD regulations due to come into force during 2023/24.

It’s a busy time for our Transformation Leads, most of whom also retain responsibility for their service, but they travel around sites regularly and are all committed to keeping the communication channels open. So, if you have any questions, why not simply stop and ask them when you see them around?

## Viapath launches new Learning Management System (LMS) for employees



Over the past few weeks and months, the Viapath Learning and Development team has been working closely with colleagues at SYNLAB UK & Ireland on the launch of a new Learning Management System (LMS) for Viapath employees. The platform went live on August 23.

Viapath has previously used the Trusts’ e-learning platforms – LEAP or TrustOLE – to complete statutory and mandatory training. However, more recently Viapath was invited by colleagues in the L&D team at SYNLAB UK & Ireland to share its LMS platform.

SYNLAB UK&I has been using the ‘Learning Pool’ platform to deliver creative online learning for employees and to manage compliance with statutory and mandatory training across the business. ‘Learning Pool’ allows Viapath to bring all statutory and mandatory training opportunities in-house, which looks like the perfect fit for the organisation, which is delighted with the functionality of its new e-learning platform.

It brings a wealth of benefits including single sign-on, personalised employee dashboards and automatic course reminders.

## Strategic Clinical Leads update

Work on implementing our new clinical structure continues with the news that the Tissue Sciences Strategic Clinical Lead role, which **Giuseppe Culora** has been occupying on an interim basis, will become a joint appointment

Giuseppe and **Mark Howard** applied jointly to this key role and are now looking forward to contributing to the strategic leadership for all clinical elements of Tissue Sciences across all sites, providing clinical input into both transformational and BAU activities.

**Pictured:** Mark Howard, Tissue Sciences Clinical Lead



## SYNLAB pathology partnerships: Stories of innovation

**Case study**  
**Collaboration, flexibility and resilience: How SYNLAB's NHS partnerships responded to the onset of COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the work of biomedical scientists like never before, with pathology laboratories finding themselves on the frontline in the fight against the virus. [Click here](#) to discover how SYNLAB's NHS partnerships, Southwest Pathology Services and Pathology First, adapted their approach to meet the needs of a health system facing enormous and unprecedented pressure.

**Case study**  
**Combining LEAN with Total Laboratory Automation (TLA) to improve the quality of NHS patient care and clinical experience**

The creation of a fully automated laboratory has transformed pathology services at **Sheffield**, delivering significant benefits for patients, clinicians and the NHS.

A major testing programme for COVID-19 patients to receive their test results, diagnosis and treatment recommendations. Having a single testing centre has been the priority, allowing clinicians to be confident that their test results are accurate and reliable. It also allows for the integration of the test into the patient's care pathway, ensuring that the results are available when and where they are needed.

The opportunity has also allowed for the use of LEAN methods of working, which have led to a significant efficiency for laboratory operations and processes.

The project was implemented following the formation of Southwest Pathology Services, a joint venture between Southwest Pathology Services and Pathology First.

Following 2020, the partnership was driven by the need to improve the quality and efficiency of pathology services across the UK.

It allows for the integration of clinical laboratory data with other NHS systems, allowing for better patient care and a more integrated approach to the patient's care journey, resulting in better outcomes for patients.

At the heart of all SYNLAB pathology partnerships is a mission to provide the highest quality testing and diagnostics services which, in turn, enables the NHS to provide the highest standards of patient care. At the same time, we also deliver a number of tangible benefits for the NHS, such as investing in pathology services which are fit for the future, making life easier for the clinicians who use our services, and enabling better value for money.

Two new case studies have been produced to showcase exactly how this is being achieved, while at the same time celebrating the talents of colleagues who make it happen.

**Collaboration, flexibility and resilience: How SYNLAB's NHS partnerships responded to the onset of COVID-19** – The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the work of biomedical scientists like never before, with pathology laboratories finding themselves on the frontline in the fight against the virus. [Click here](#) to discover how SYNLAB's NHS partnerships, Southwest Pathology Services and Pathology First, adapted their approach to meet the needs of a health system facing enormous and unprecedented pressure.

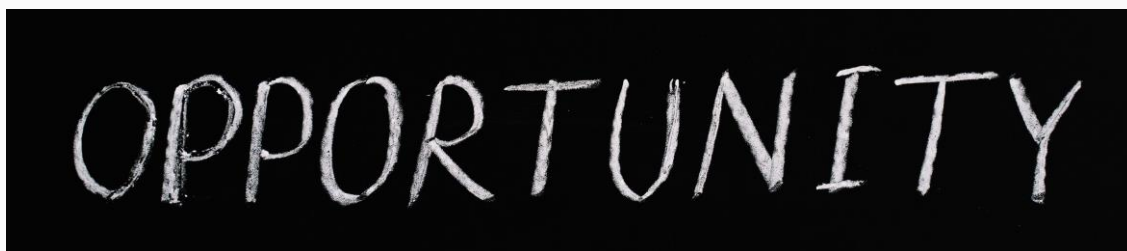
**Combining LEAN with Total Laboratory Automation (TLA): How Southwest Pathology Services used LEAN and TLA to improve the quality of NHS patient care and clinical experience**

- The creation of a fully automated laboratory has transformed pathology services in Somerset, delivering significant benefits for patients, clinicians and the NHS. [Click here](#) to learn how automation slashed testing turnaround times, gave consultants remote access to tests and streamlined workflows, among many other improvements.

And, of course, there are many similar activities underway within Viapath too, some of which pre-date the launch of the SYNLAB/NHS partnership. We will be working with colleagues over the coming months to tease out these tales of excellence and make sure we can all celebrate the great work that is going on within pathology services in South East London.

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**Develop your career with us**



Many new career opportunities continue to be created as we move along our transformation journey. These are advertised on ViaNet and applications can be made through the SYNLAB UK & Ireland website at [www.synlab.co.uk/careers/current-opportunities/](http://www.synlab.co.uk/careers/current-opportunities/)

Among the new posts being advertised now are:

- **Organisational Design and Development Consultant**
- **Information Security Lead**

Viapath colleagues, please notify your line manager and the recruitment team if you plan to apply by emailing [synlab-recruitment@viapath.org](mailto:synlab-recruitment@viapath.org)

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