

18 November 2020: Staff focus group for pathology and microbiology

Facilitator	Ellie Stennett	No. of participants	19
<p>Questions/Comments raised during online event:</p> <p>QUESTION: What will happen to the existing Basingstoke site if it is chosen as the site for the new hospital? Will it be demolished, and what will happen to the staff currently working there?</p> <p>ANSWER: Nothing is confirmed, but parts of the area would move into the parking to allow for the building. The project would act as an extension on the building and a refurbishment of existing facilities. However, this is still up for discussion in public consultation.</p> <p>QUESTION: If it is at the J7 site will there be good transport links for all the staff, including Andover, Winchester and Basingstoke, as provided by the Trust?</p> <p>ANSWER: Transport is a major priority for the programme, including cars, bikes, walking, public transport and linking between sites. This is all being reviewed and improved.</p> <p>QUESTION: How will this move affect the transportation of samples used in microbiology and pathology? (during the previous merge of microbiology all onto one site lead to concerns with it taking up to 24 hours for some work to reach Winchester)</p> <p>COMMENT: Emphasise on the need for a state of the art pathology hub, and looking to engage the wider community as early as possible to possibly acquire extra funds, to overcome demands on money. The staff hub also needs attention, as it is one the most attractive and welcoming parts of the Trust i.e a doctor's mess, a staff area.</p> <p>COMMENT: IPC must be present throughout the building process to manage any possible issues with plumbing and ventilation etc.</p> <p>COMMENT: As a growing clinical infection service, there is the want to get a specifically named infectious disease ward, with state of the art ventilation facilities. The whole hospital must be flexible to cope with change in demand e.g with isolation rooms, while maintaining staff, patient and visitor safety.</p> <p>QUESTION: What is the plan for pathology and diagnostics in the new build? Where will it be based? Will there be a new hub on a new site? This is one of major questions for the staff.</p> <p>ANSWER: The Hampshire Together New Hospital will be built in the context of the reasonable pathology network programme. This means there are various options, which have not yet been decided. Issues about hubs are being raised with the Hampshire Together team, and that area of planning has not yet been finalised.</p>			

Discussion 1 – Do you feel up to date on the programme’s progress so far?

Weekly updates on the Hampshire Together project, and new staff being employed, like an innovation lead, to support the project.

Most information is coming through the emails about the Hampshire Together project, although it is often hard to find the time to read them – busy lab staff are often aware it's there but struggle to make time to engage with the information.

Facebook is also helpful to pick up information, especially when you don't have time to look at emails, as it is quicker and can read from home.

Best for face-to-face and emails – meetings such as these are very helpful as pathology staff want to be quite involved, wanting to know more and hear more about what's happening around them.

From a management point of view, the hand down of information to all members of the team isn't really happening, due to lack of time to read emails – therefore more sessions like this one may be more helpful to get more information in a shorter period of time, due to the demands of COVID on time.

Possibly trying to use notice boards and huddles more effectively i.e printing out the updates and chatting between staff. Focusing on getting the information out in a variety of ways so it reaches more people.

Do you think you could easily describe what the Hampshire Together project is and the purpose of it?

Due to being exceptionally busy, it is very hard to read all the information – on emails – and therefore feels like they don't know much about it. This could be overcome by someone (possibly from another department) giving a brief summary in some of the daily huddles.

The problem is the updates have so much information on that it is often hard to pick out the key bits of information. Using two or three bullet points, to signpost to more information, to pin up in offices/labs might be useful to some people.

A FAQ format could also be used to provide extra information alongside announcements

What is the overall feeling about the programme in your area?

The main question is whether the project is actually going to happen – as there have been promises of such before, and this has effected the perception of the programme for most the staff (from the failure of the CPH) – and therefore people might not feel excited or worried yet. The trust of some of the staff about the project is quite low.

Discussion 2 – What current challenges are you facing in your area at this moment?

The biggest challenge in microbiology, at the moment, is the lack of space – this issues has been enunciated by the COVID outbreak. The need for a lab which can respond to pandemics or outbreaks is very important.

The transport and tracking of specimens between sites calls for a robust transport system, due to specimens going missing in the past.

An appropriate pathology environment following continuous issues of the spaces being too hot or too cold, this is uncomfortable for the staff, but more importantly effects the equipment and the tests which can be temperature dependent. Appropriate air-conditioning, ventilation and heating is needed to not compromise the service they are providing, as it has had a massive impact in the past

How do you communicate with other departments, sites, outside organisations and how could these systems and technology be improved?

The Wi-Fi is not robust enough to cope with the demands of the various systems and technology. Computer issues are also a frequent problem, while the server and the disk not working properly or not having the facilities for the job. The IT system needs a change, especially it is going to be used to communicate between sites.

Although within Pathology the communication is good, there are problems with that department being forgotten or overlooked due to its location in the hospital itself, despite the fact it is involved with a large portion of patient care. Stakeholder management, involvement in projects etc could be improved.

How do you find the transport, parking and public, currently in our hospitals?

It is a stress factor for the whole staff, with some coming in an hour early to ensure they can make it to work on time/can park. They need more parking spaces, and this is not helped by the inflexible shifts in the pathology department.

The transport between sites, with some people getting turned away at the end of the queue, is a problem, with staff struggling to arrive even earlier to ensure a place on the transport service. It adds a lot of extra stress and can often set people's day back considerably – perhaps two or a bigger mini bus is needed, especially if it is going between three sites.

Although using more home working and digital advancements – perhaps not for pathology staff, but for those where it is possible – could open up more space for staff who need to work on site.

The park and ride can add a large portion of time to a working day, due to demands on the buses and the travel to the parking itself. Possibly having two park and ride sites – on either side of the new site – could be more accessible for people living on all sides of the hospital.

Have any positives from the COVID outbreak been incorporated into your department?

Changes, like digital appointments, can't really work in the pathology department, with the infection clinic mostly continuing to use face to face appointments.

Some phone clinics are being used in haematology.

The facility of Microsoft Teams has provided some amazing opportunities to build stronger relationships with the pathology managers.

How do you think communication with other health care services is working, and how do you think it could be improved?

The use of ICE system to send out lab results from microbiology and comms with GPs regarding changes in the lab works reasonably well. The integration of clinical services is an area of development, with the new OPAT service going well.

Pathology is looking to form a network across the Trusts in the region to connect and work with the labs.

Discussion 3 – What was your reaction to the news about the site announcement?

Interested about the land possibly being acquired near Basingstoke Hospital, as a local Basingstoke resident, as it seems there is not much land available currently.

As a Winchester resident the number one concern in the transport, and the Trust providing a good shuttle service, especially if it is moving to M7 junction.

Also raises concerns about what will happen with RHCH i.e will it be demolished, how will it affect future work. Maybe looking at the distribution of where HHFT staff live in relation to each site.

How far would you be willing to travel for work?

Normally based on your pay grade, transport costs, and how long the actual journey takes from home to the site – considering other commitments like childcare.

Some staff have left due to transport issues.

Within the context of pathology, there are extra time demand with out of hours and services, like taking and processing an urgent sample, which is influenced by time taken to travel to work. Pathology runs a 24 hour service, so must consider if transport is available and at what times during the day, to fit to shifts etc.

Maintaining staff accommodation for those who use it when on-call etc

Final Thoughts

There is a want for good computer systems, and physical resources like tables. Other resources like staff wellbeing spaces, which often are overlooked.

Report written by: