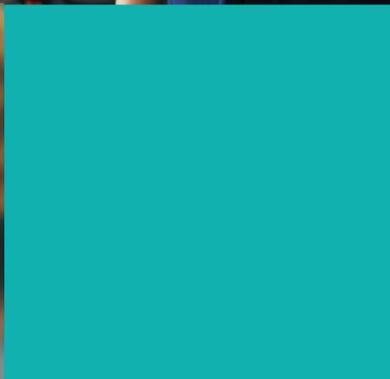
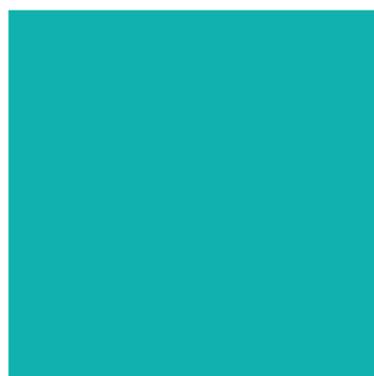
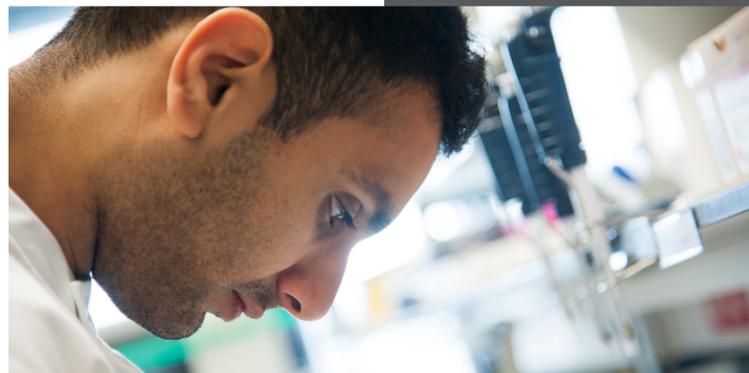




Viapath 2019 Quality Account Assuming Our Ambition



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Welcome to the 2019 Viapath Quality Account



A message from the Viapath Chief Executive Officer Dougie Dryburgh

Welcome to the 2019 Viapath Quality Account, which sets out progress in our delivery of the highest quality, safe and patient-focused pathology services. This is an important document which enables us to explain to customers and stakeholders, how we keep a continued focus on providing effective, responsive, caring and well-led services.

2019 was another successful year of delivery for Viapath, exceeding the results achieved in 2018. Overall activity increased by 5% with both core contract and third-party test volumes increasing.



This growth was achieved despite the backdrop of uncertainty concerning the outcome of the tender for pathology and laboratory services for the South East London Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (SEL STP), which includes the re-tendering of our core contracts, which expired in September 2020.

Our 'patient-first' approach has been at the heart of all our work and has enabled us to exceed our plans in a number of areas, for example:

- Partnership working with our NHS partners, Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT), and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (KCH) generated 7% activity growth over the prior year.
- Growth in Genetics-based tests (Breast Cancer Tests, 100K Next Generation Sequencing), rapid flu tests and increased screening for Candida Auris in Infection Sciences.
- This growth was achieved whilst continuing to focus on quality, with all laboratories which are ISO15189:2012 accredited either maintaining their accreditation status, or being successful in achieving renewal of their accreditation, following re-assessment at the end of the four-year cycle.

Viapath is fundamentally a people business, from our employees in the laboratories and support services through to the patients we serve. We continued to invest in our people with 131 internal training events attended by over 1000 employees in 2019, and 90 apprenticeship programmes going live covering a variety of disciplines from data analysis to infrastructure management. We also continued to help scientific employees complete their Scientist Training and Higher Specialist Scientist Training programmes.

Our commitment to invest in new technology also continued. Most notably the Blood Transfusion Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) went live in 2019 marking the completion of a major phase of the LIMS improvement project.

During 2019, Viapath worked very closely with our NHS partners in order to prepare for when the United Kingdom left the EU on 31st January 2020, and the transition period until 31st December 2020. This required detailed planning to ensure continuity of service provision, whilst remaining focused on providing the best possible service to patients and customers.



The end of 2019, saw the emerging problem of the coronavirus pandemic but our forward planning and preparedness also placed us in a good position to respond to this global crisis in 2020.

In a matter of weeks COVID-19 rapidly spread, hitting the UK in early 2020. This resulted in national emergency measures being put in place, with key objectives including protecting the NHS and the most vulnerable, from this devastating disease. Our 2020 Quality Account will give a full account of how we responded, however, in the meantime key successes include:

- Testing capability for COVID-19 increased to circa.8000/day.
- Phlebotomy services stepped up and worked closely with the Trusts' and CCGs to deliver their service wherever the patient needed it.
- Tragically our Mortuary service team at KCH had to manage unprecedented demand and worked round the clock, to ensure that families and their loved ones received excellent care.
- Viapath support and corporate functions normally delivered from Francis House (FH), switched to all FH based employees delivering services from home.

- Partnership working between Viapath, GSTT and King's College, London (KCL) to provide COVID-19 diagnostic services by setting up the June Almeida laboratory on the Guy's Hospital site.
- Providing services to support partner Trusts' in staff testing, and
- Providing a testing service for local care homes in conjunction with King's Health Partners (KHP).

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person in Viapath for the part they play every day and particularly in response to coronavirus. We have risen to the challenges which these unprecedented times have brought; developed closer working with all partners including GSTT, KCH, KCL and KHP and demonstrated our operational capabilities, strength in innovation and collaborative working with research colleagues.



Dogie Dryburgh
Chief Executive Officer



Innovation & Scientific Progress



Medical Director Professor Jonathan Edgeworth

The introductions from colleagues in this Quality Account present pictures of two very different worlds. The first contains some examples of the breadth of activity that takes place every day in all our laboratories, providing services to healthcare staff and their patients in hospitals and the surrounding communities. They show how Viapath integrates quality and safety, with performance and efficiency, and innovation and training, embedded within both a diverse inner city hospital and a leading Academic Health Sciences Centre.

The second gives early perspectives on how Pathology has responded to this devastating COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed all our professional and personal lives within such a short space of time. Who would have predicted that one comparatively small service, virology, that exists as an independent laboratory on two of our sites and embedded in microbiology on two others, would be thrust so openly into the limelight at the forefront of the NHS response to COVID-19 alongside similar virology laboratories up and down the country. A day doesn't go by without some emerging news on testing, screening, PCR and serology that attracts intense media, political, public and professional scrutiny. A mixture of aspiration on testing numbers, frustration with perceived failings and hope for rapid scientific advances to make testing faster, more accurate, cheaper or easier to do. In the midst of all this, our virology teams have worked long hours developing, evaluating and delivering the best of these new tests, working alongside clinicians and scientists in our partner University, King's College London.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Edgeworth".

Professor Jonathan Edgeworth
Medical Director

They have kept ahead of the growing clinical demand over the past six months, adhering to those same underpinning principles embedded in all our laboratories: quality, innovation and operational delivery from the front line up through to the tripartite professional leadership structures. At the same time although virology is particularly in the spotlight, teams across Viapath have all played their part. For example, phlebotomy and indeed every laboratory handling patient samples particularly high volume samples in blood sciences and blood transfusion have introduced heightened infection control and laboratory health and safety interventions to keep everyone safe. And away from the front line, many Viapath support functions have adapted processes to manage changing needs, particularly in procurement and human resources.

As we look ahead to winter we know testing demand will increase further, for patients, staff and their families. In continuing to meet that need, we will learn from recent experience particularly by listening to our staff and clinical customers, to identify things that went well and those that didn't. This will ensure that in addition to getting the science and the technology right, pathology contributes to ensuring the whole pathway works well for patients and the NHS, while supporting staff in these challenging times with a culture of transparency and fairness.

The next six months brings an additional major change for Pathology as our NHS owners complete their tender assessments and we begin implementation of a new service contract following Serco's departure. This will bring changes to our laboratory network and underpinning governance structures particularly as we move into a hub and spoke model. I am sure colleagues across Pathology will approach this new era with the same commitment as was brought to the COVID-19 response. They can draw on many years of close partnership working between Viapath, the NHS and University, and the values and culture that defines our success as an independent thriving Pathology organisation embedded within the clinical and academic community of South East London.

"Viapath integrates quality and safety, with performance and efficiency, and innovation and training, embedded within both a diverse inner city hospital and a leading Academic Health Sciences Centre."

Chief Scientific Officer Dr Dominic Harrington

Throughout 2019 the biomedical and clinical scientists at Viapath have applied their expertise to deliver laboratory diagnostics that support patient care. Notable achievements include the replacement of our core chemistry and haematology analytical equipment at the Denmark Hill and Princess Royal University Hospital sites. Viapath serves a diverse patient population, which introduces complexity for scientists whenever new equipment is introduced. This is because we have to ensure that components in samples collected from patients don't cause interference, leading to incorrect results being issued. One common interference is bilirubin, a naturally occurring yellow compound present in all blood samples. The concentration of bilirubin can become very high in patients with liver disease, for example, which means we have to take special care to select methods well suited to this patient group.

Also at Denmark Hill, and in line with NICE DG30 guidelines, the Biochemistry laboratory went live with the quantitative FIT (faecal immunochemical test) in Spring 2019 using the Mast OC Sensor. Colorectal cancer is a common cancer in the UK which, in addition to red flag symptoms (bleeding per rectum), can often present with vague symptoms including abdominal pain, weight loss, altered bowel habits, anaemia and blood in stools (non-visible). People with vague symptoms in primary care should have a baseline faecal blood test prior to referral and further investigation, e.g. colonoscopy. FIT is used to screen for small amounts of blood in stool samples using antibodies specific to the globulin component of human haemoglobin.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Harrington', positioned above the printed name.

Dr Dominic Harrington
Chief Scientific Officer

At Guy's Hospital, the Biochemical Genetics laboratory validated a new LC-MS/MS method for plasma lysosphingolipids. This was a collaborative project with the WellChild laboratory at Evelina London and ABSciex. The method uses novel technology called a SelexION Differential Ion Mobility Spectrometry which is able to separate stereoisomers allowing us to differentiate between Krabbe and Gaucher disease. The new method is suitable for routine metabolic screening and will reduce the need for invasive diagnostic procedures.

Other innovation highlights across Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals include: the evaluation of a near patient testing device for Kidney function, allowing for real time, joint decision, treatment changes to be made in the clinic while the patient is with the doctor; the evaluation of a new HbA1c machine for use in patients with conditions affecting haemoglobin, e.g. sickle cell disease and thalassaemia to improve disease control in diabetic patients – we have found this technology to be well suited to serving our multi-ethnic patient population; the introduction of a new flow cytometer which offers superior performance to improve the leukaemia and lymphoma flow cytometry panels. One final example is the Nanopore 16S Pilot Service which began in December at St Thomas' Hospital. This made same day detection of bacteria in respiratory samples possible in patients in Intensive Care with severe respiratory failure.

To promote the identification and dissemination of healthcare innovations, we continue to sponsor the UK Advancing Healthcare Award for Innovation in Healthcare Science.

The award provides us with a platform to celebrate the success of our peers. We look forward to celebrating with the 2019 winner when their success is announced in the coming months.

Within Viapath our 'Innovation Fund' and 'Scientific Learning and Development Fund' continued to support our scientists. These two funds have facilitated translational research and helped employees to reach their full potential respectively. We were delighted to hold Viapath's fifth annual 'Excellence in Pathology' award in December and be able to congratulate our winner Dr Louise Howe from the Clinical Transplantation Laboratory at Guy's Hospital. Dr Howe applied a rapid flow cytometric cross match assay to assess compatibility between potential donor-recipient pairs. In the deceased donor setting the turnaround time of this test is critical; any delay to transplantation can result in delayed graft function and poorer long-term outcomes. This method is equally applicable in the live-donor setting, increasing productivity and capacity, allowing for improved service without compromising the quality of care offered to our patients.



Dr Katharine Bates
Scientific Director
(KCH - Denmark Hill and PRUH)



Dr Rachel Carling
Scientific Director
(Guy's and St Thomas')

Quality Director Liz Adair

In July 2019, the NHS Patient Safety Strategy was launched, which aims to build on progress already made to improve patient safety over the last twenty years. "To err is human: Building a safer health system"* was published in 2000 which shone a light on errors which occur in healthcare and the NHS, pointed it away from people making honest mistakes and gave a rallying cry to design a safer healthcare system. The NHS and healthcare providers in the UK have made good progress so far, but the new strategy sets out how to take the learning further. It has a particular focus on the human factors which affect patient safety and changing how we investigate and report incidents in order to improve systems.

The Patient Safety Strategy opens with part of a quote which encapsulates both the NHS patient safety journey and is pertinent for Viapath too:

"We are not here to curse the darkness, but to light the candle that can guide us through that darkness to a safe and sane future." "For the world is changing, the old era is ending. The old ways will not do."

- John F Kennedy 1960

[*http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25077248](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25077248)

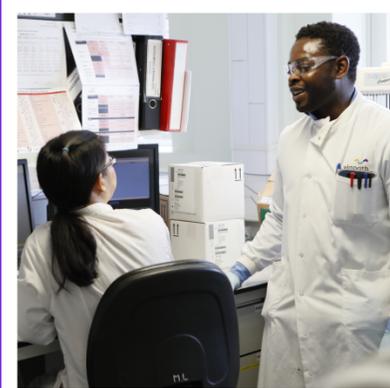


E Adair

Liz Adair
Quality Director



Towards the end of 2018, I appointed a Head of Clinical Governance and Patient Safety, Alison Fuller, to support the Medical Director Professor Edgeworth and myself, in taking forward a number of patient safety initiatives. Alison is a highly experienced clinical governance and patient safety specialist and helped us shine a light on our practices. A key element of this important work was a review of the twenty six serious and complex incidents, which had occurred at Viapath during 2017 and 2018. The results of the review were presented in the summer of 2019; no trend was found but a number of recommendations were made to improve our processes and systems, and to design them to incorporate the "human factors". You can read more about the review and the PathFocus project which incorporated a number of the recommendations, in the incidents section.



During 2019, although some colleagues were focused on the tender process for the core contracts to provide future pathology services, Viapath has continued to make good progress on tackling key problems and risks which can affect our ability to provide a safe service. For example, our blood transfusion laboratory service at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT), underwent a programme to change the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) from PathNet Classic to Clinsys Winpath. In order to mitigate and resolve many of the issues raised when using the old system, Viapath worked very closely with the Trust and clinicians, to design new processes. It also enabled the team to remove a number of long-standing risks when issuing blood products.

These included reducing processes which relied on manual input and raising flags on the system when unusual events occurred to prevent the wrong blood product being issued. The project went "live" successfully on 25 November 2019 with very few issues post go-live. You can read how the team have seen a reduction in errors and incidents as a result of the change, in the incidents section.

All our laboratory services worked extremely hard to maintain accreditation to the ISO15189:2012 standard and the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) assessors visited all our accredited services in 2019. They also visited the GSTT blood transfusion service early in 2020, as did the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to inspect the changes made with the LIMS platform realignment in 2019. I am very pleased to report that both agencies were satisfied with the improvements made. You can read more about the inspection and accreditation agencies which regularly inspect Viapath services in the [2014 Quality Account](#).

As 2020 began, we were of course unaware of the devastating impact Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome CoronaVirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), or COVID-19, would wreak globally following those initial reports from China. Our Quality Account for 2020, will give numerous insights and examples of the professionalism, bravery and resilience all our services have demonstrated, in joining together with the NHS to fight COVID-19.

I wish you and your families good health and thank you for your continued support for our tireless work to improve everyone's health.

Chief Operating Officer Richard Rolt

Throughout 2019 the growing demand experienced in previous years for Viapath's pathology services continued at pace. Yet another record-breaking year was achieved, having reached 36.5 million units of activity processed, we also exceeded three million units of activity within a month six times during 2019 having only exceeded this milestone once in previous years. Growth came not only from our core customers, but from across the healthcare sector and our broad set of customers nationally and internationally. Viapath's reputation for delivering a high quality, timely and responsive customer focused service continued through the year with the operational teams responding to the challenge in a professional, diligent, efficient and agile way. To ensure service was maintained through a period of growth we responded with an uplift in overall workforce provision of 40% of total labour hours, compared to 2018, achieved through a combination of additional staffing and operational effectiveness. In 2019 our productivity, measured by the total units of activity processed per hour, remained steady at 20.9. Employee sickness absence was 2.7% across the year, a figure that was sustained from the previous year.

We continued to focus on our goal of maintaining and delivering the highest quality pathology service in the market, ensuring that our reputation for providing scientific excellence that supports clinical decisions to aid patient care was maintained. This was measured by close monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs) and turnaround time (TAT) targets and is underpinned by our continuous achievement of accreditation by external independent bodies.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Rolt". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Richard Rolt
Chief Operating Officer

This was all delivered alongside focus on responding to the South East London Pathology re-procurement and delivering significant projects, including the first phase of the Core Analytical Platform replacement across our Blood Sciences laboratories, and the implementation of a brand new LIMS platform into our Blood Transfusion service at St Thomas'.



In addition to expanding the workforce to cope with growth we also made significant investments during 2019. Most notably we were able to finalise investments in Tissue Processors across the business to ensure that our fleet of these critical histopathology platforms are as modern as possible. Other significant investments included a QIASymphony automated preparation platform for Virology, a Bactec blood culture analyser for Microbiology and eight PCR thermocyclers for Constitutional Genetics.



During 2019 the senior leaders in operational management continued to come together regularly as the operations executive (OpsExec) team to provide collaborative oversight to the day-to-day delivery of services and strategic planning for the operation. The OpsExec brings together the senior leaders of our tripartite leadership in the organisation with our Medical Director, Chief Scientific Officer, Quality Director, Clinical Directors, Operations Directors and Scientific Directors all in attendance.

I am pleased to report progress of the Core Analytical Platform project which during the year delivered five separate go-lives of

biochemistry, haematology and coagulation analytical platforms at the PRUH and Denmark Hill. Most notably the project achieved consolidation of 89 biochemistry assays that will be used on our newly delivered Roche platforms at all of our sites in due course.

The IT and Blood Transfusion teams should be commended for an exceptional conclusion to the implementation of the Clinisys Winpath LIMS platform that has successfully reduced significant manual workaround risks that were necessary to operate the legacy PathNet Classic system. Notably both UKAS and the MHRA were very impressed with the quality of the projects, the former identifying an unprecedented number of zero findings on inspection and the latter noting aspects of best national practice for a computer system project, praise indeed.

It was a very successful year for UKAS (ISO 15189:2012) accreditations with a total of eighteen laboratories retaining accreditation and a busy UKAS calendar of more than twenty visits across Viapath. We have experience and an understanding of the pace required, to maintain accreditation, therefore, in 2020 we will continue to work with our laboratory scientists to raise our standards and ensure that we see accreditation as an output of attention to detail and quality management systems, and not the goal. As pioneers and leaders in pathology we are therefore seen to be setting the industry standards and not depending on external standards to set our goals.

I look forward in 2020 to the challenges of our planned major service redesign and moving towards a new consolidated target operating model. I was pleased to see that our recent pulse survey of employees demonstrated that 98% of Viapath employees felt that patients were at the heart of the decisions that we all make. We will continue our commitment to scientific and clinical service excellence, in the knowledge that our teams have patients at the forefront of their minds.

2019 Quality Performance Report



Incidents

Adverse Incidents / Patient Safety Incident Notification

As a provider of services to NHS funded patients, Viapath has a responsibility to report adverse and patient safety incidents. Patient safety incidents are any unintended or unexpected incident which could have, or did, lead to harm for one or more patients receiving healthcare. Reporting helps Viapath and the wider NHS to learn from mistakes and to act to keep patients safe.

Viapath access NHS partner Trusts' electronic incident reporting systems to capture patient safety incidents, which are subsequently uploaded to the statutory National Reporting Learning System (NRLS). All employees can access the electronic reporting system from each site and work in partnership with each NHS patient safety and service team to investigate. This approach has established an open and transparent way of working, to understand what happened, the actions required and to share the learning.

In 2019, patient safety and adverse incident reporting, highlighted a 7.8% decrease across all sites when compared with 2018 (Table 1). The number of adverse incidents we have are a tiny percentage of our overall activity, so we review our progress by considering how many incidents we have had per 100,000 units of activity. In 2019 we undertook 36.5 million units of activity and had 2.3 incidents per 100,000 units of activity.

There are always a number of reasons for such changes, but it likely

includes impact of the targeted work we undertook to reduce clusters of incidents that occurred in previous years. Here are some examples.

In the Tissue Sciences service at GSTT, the team took action to reduce/prevent eye-splashes and incidents involving sharp objects. Their actions included reinforcing the use of eye-protection in Cytology (following four eye-splash incidents in 2018), improved H&S induction for junior pathologists regarding blades in dissection (following five incidents in 2018), and introducing sharps boxes that remove scalpel blades, to ensure employees are not handling blades in order to dispose of them. The team also revised their sample filing system and ensured that regular audits are in place to make it easier to retrieve samples from archiving.

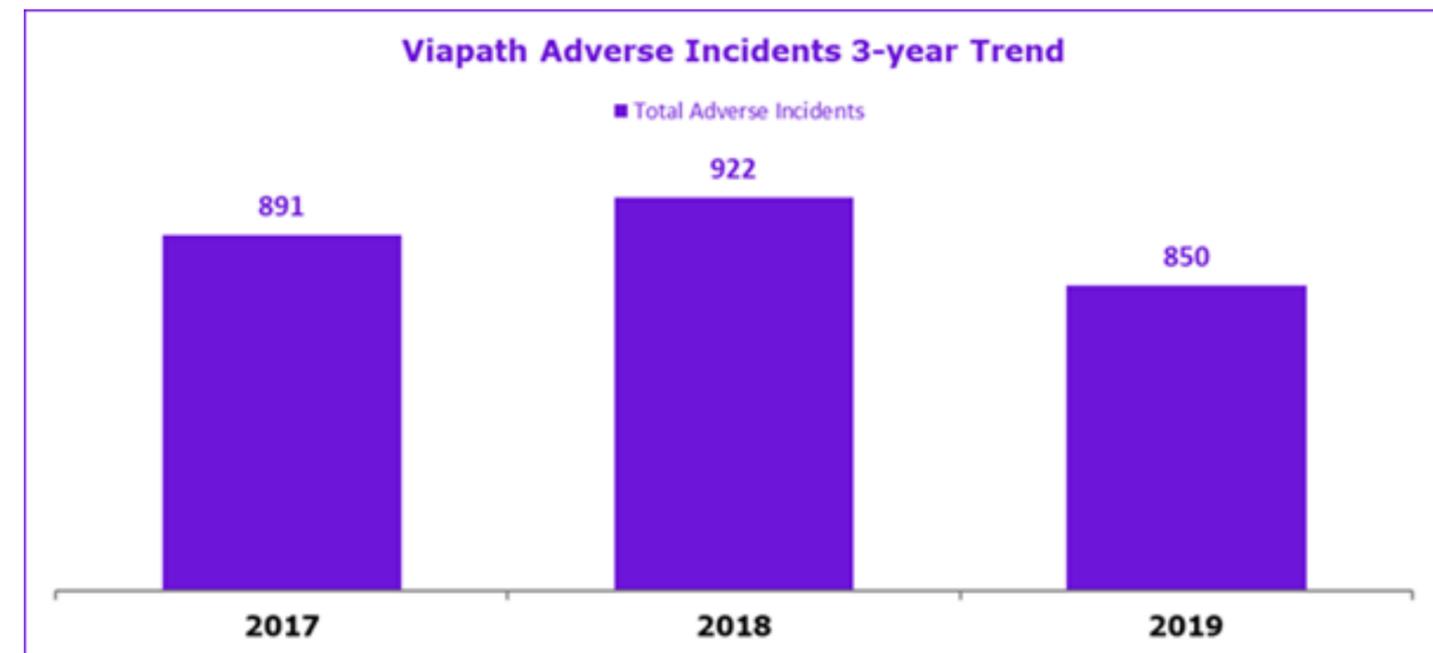


Table 1: Three-year trend analysis for NHS adverse incidents reported by Viapath.

At GSTT, the Blood Sciences service saw a small drop in reported incidents from 81 in 2018, to 66 in 2019. This included a reduction in H&S related incidents and reduction in “delayed communication” of incidents reported by clinicians, after targeted work to improve their service.

At the KCH Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH) site, the number of reported incidents steadily decreased over 2019. This was associated primarily to two changes. Firstly, a change in reporting. The team had their electronic Quality Management System installed which meant they no longer reported all non-patient issues on the Trust electronic incident reporting system. This saw a drop in the total number of incidents, ensuring that those reported were patient related incidents only. Secondly, the team commenced a major programme to refresh their equipment and instruments across the whole of the blood sciences laboratory. The highest number of reported incidents at the PRUH during 2018 and the first half of 2019, were in relation to the ageing equipment. The team saw a rapid decrease when the new instruments were installed mid 2019 with the decrease sustained into 2020. This is an excellent example of how technology improvement can link through directly to improvements in service.

However, although we had seen a drop in reported incidents and we think the improvement work has certainly contributed to that reduction, we also wanted to review how issues and incidents were being escalated. Our customers challenged us to review whether they were being addressed quickly enough. Therefore, we set up the PathFocus project that you can read about later, on page 20.

"The team saw a rapid decrease in incidents when the new instruments were installed mid 2019, which has been sustained into 2020."



Serious Incidents and Never Events

The NHS Serious Incident Framework (2015) defines an incident requiring investigation as an:

'incident that occurred in relation to NHS-funded services and care resulting in unexpected or avoidable death, harm or injury to patient, carer, staff or visitor'.

Serious incidents are declared by our Partner NHS Trusts and not Viapath.

A Never Event is defined as:

'A serious incident that is wholly preventable since guidance or safety recommendations provide strong systemic barriers and are available at a national level and should be in place within all healthcare providers'.

The reporting of both, is a statutory requirement in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and Care Quality Commission regulated activities.

Duty of Candour

The Duty of Candour is our legal duty to be open and honest with patients and their families, when things go wrong.

Viapath continues to discharge its Duty of Candour and Being Open as appropriate with all patients and their families. We do this in partnership with the designated clinical lead Consultant / GP.

Viapath NHS Serious Incidents in 2019

There were six NHS Serious Incidents in 2019, which was the same as 2018 (see Table 2).

	2016	2017	2018	2019
NHS Reported Never Events/ Serious Incidents	1	12*	6**	6

*Table 2: Summary of total Viapath reported Never Events/Serious Incidents (*includes one Never Event,**includes one third party event).*

"The Duty of Candour is our legal duty to be open and honest with patients and their families, when things go wrong"

Three of the six Serious Incidents (SI) occurred at the beginning of 2019 and are described below.

The first occurred in the GSTT Tissue Sciences service, when 39 tissue samples were damaged by a processing machine during their preparation for analysis. Low harm was reported for three patients whose tissue samples unfortunately were unable to be fully analysed. The investigation identified issues with the maintenance schedule of the processor and some improvements to the training and competencies for staff using the instrument that were linked with the incident and could prevent any recurrence.

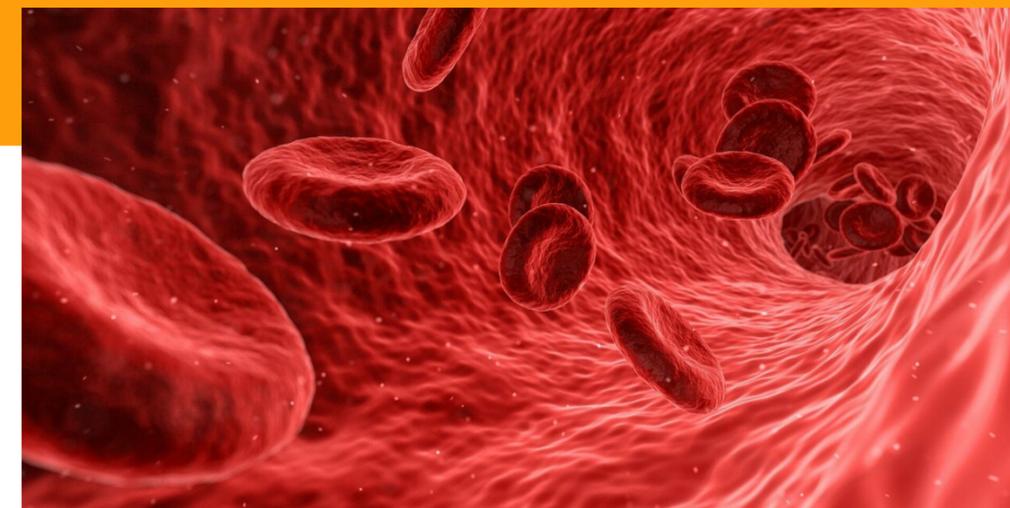
The second SI happened in the blood transfusion laboratory at GSTT. 26 women were given an injection of anti-D antibody over a period of three days, where the temperature of the refrigerator where the anti-D product was stored, exceeded the manufacturer's temperature range by approximately 10C. Anti-D is given as an antidote via an injection, to kill any RhD positive blood cells that may have crossed over to the mother's blood stream from the baby, that can sensitise the RhD negative mother and cause problems for future pregnancies. You can read more about the condition on the NHS website.

Identifying that antibody had been stored at a higher temperature represented a deficiency in our operational practices and quality

control processes. Although considered unlikely it was also possible that the antibodies would not work as effectively. The team therefore investigated what had happened and worked with the manufacturer and the clinicians caring for the women. All of the women were recalled to repeat the anti-D injection with a new product as an outpatient, and to check their sensitisation to anti-D. Some will be followed up long term to ensure that if they become pregnant again that they are closely monitored and prevent potential for any harm in future pregnancies.

The third incident was a sickle cell disease screening incident. This included two infants initially reported as having sickle cell disease by the screening laboratory at the King's College Hospital site, but when they were retested at a later date, they were found to be sickle cell gene carriers and didn't have sickle cell disease themselves.

In both cases the mother was contacted and made aware that their infants were actually sickle cell carriers. Consequently, the laboratory, along with the community midwives undertook a rigorous review of the whole process. The KCH screening laboratory were reviewed by experts from one of our other screening laboratories and changes were made in the way that the



laboratory analysis was conducted. The investigation, including evidenced actions was overseen by the NHS screening programme commissioners who were re-assured that the changes made, would mitigate the risk of a recurrence.

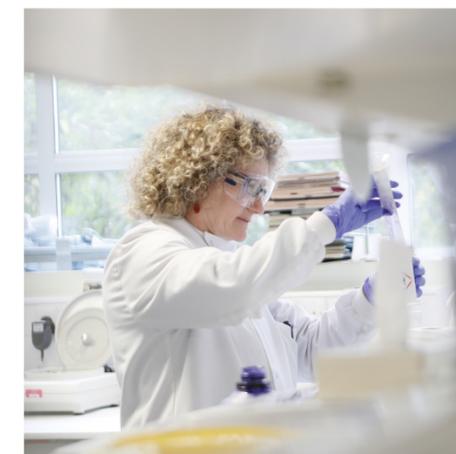
Although each of the three incidents occurred in different services, we identified that there were a number of themes for wider learning that could benefit from becoming an organisational priority.

Incident Review

The Viapath Medical Director asked the Head of Clinical Governance and Patient Safety to undertake a review of all serious and complex incidents which occurred during 2017-18, to understand if there were additional common themes or patterns to the incidents, that could be identified and addressed. In total 26 incidents were reviewed, with 15 occurring in 2017 and 11 in 2018. The review considered the detailed investigation reports, action plans and evidence.

It identified a number of opportunities to improve services which included:

- Ensuring that there is a common approach across Viapath to escalate incidents and risks to prevent delay in responding
- Continue to improve how we share ideas and learning from incidents across all services
- Create an approach to helping new managers develop their understanding of Viapath's internal managerial processes and competencies
- Keeping a focus on patients and their safety, from all services



PathFocus Project and Human Factors

As a result of the small cluster of three Serious Incidents at the beginning of the year, together with the Incident review, a programme of work was formed which we called PathFocus.

The work included introducing patient stories to Viapath and developing a video featuring a patient, which is now used for the induction programme for all new employees. Patient stories are a powerful way of gaining valuable insights to improve services, and for all employees to keep a focus on patients, ensuring they are at the centre of everything we do.

The Learning & Development team created a Management Passport to help all new managers develop their managerial skills, and understand the internal management processes at Viapath.

The programme also focused on escalation, to ensure that all employees understand their responsibilities and how to raise concerns or highlight a risk.

Human Factors

Another common theme that came from our review of SIs and complex incidents was the importance of understanding Human Factors as a contributor to errors in healthcare service delivery. It is becoming increasingly recognised across healthcare services globally,

that delivering services to patients can place individuals, teams and organisations under pressure. This may have an impact on the quality of care or service potentially causing harm to patients. A definition which NHS England uses to describe human factors is:

“Enhancing clinical performance through an understanding of the effects of teamwork, tasks, equipment, workspace, culture and organisation on human behaviour and abilities and application of that knowledge in clinical settings”

Catchpole (2010), cited in Department of Health Human Factors Reference Group Interim Report, 1 March 2012, National Quality Board, March 2012. Available at: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/part-rel/nqb/ag-min/>

Viapath has begun embedding these concepts across our organisation. In 2019, multiple training sessions were delivered by the Director of Operations, attended by ~350 members of staff and this will continue throughout 2020. This will help us take forward our learning from incidents and events, with a particular focus on how we can optimise human factors aspects to deliver safe care. You can also read about some of the techniques used by the Viapath Service Improvement Team to improve the design of processes and procedures, in the Service Improvement section.

Risk Management

Identifying things that could go wrong and then putting in place measures to prevent such future adverse events, or reducing the potential impact of such events if they happened all, broadly comes under the concept of “Risk Management”. Viapath identifies risks based on their potential to prevent the delivery of safe, high quality and effective care.

There are risks identified for the whole of Pathology, such as a major failure of an IT system. Each laboratory also has local risks and potential threats which are assessed and reviewed regularly. Examples include, managing risks associated with equipment changes or a change in demand which alters shift patterns and extends the working day of the laboratory. Risk management has many components which are briefly presented here, but further details can be found in the Viapath 2017 Quality Account.

The grading of the risks on the Viapath risk registers in 2019 are shown on the right in Table 3.

Our top Red risks are shared with and held jointly with our NHS partners and include those associated with the major IT systems and physical infrastructure of some of our laboratories.

The reduction in risks in October 2019, represents a review of the risk registers and the successful completion of improvement programmes;

for example, the refresh of the instruments in blood sciences at the PRUH and the Blood Transfusion service LIMS upgrade project at GSTT, which was nearing completion.

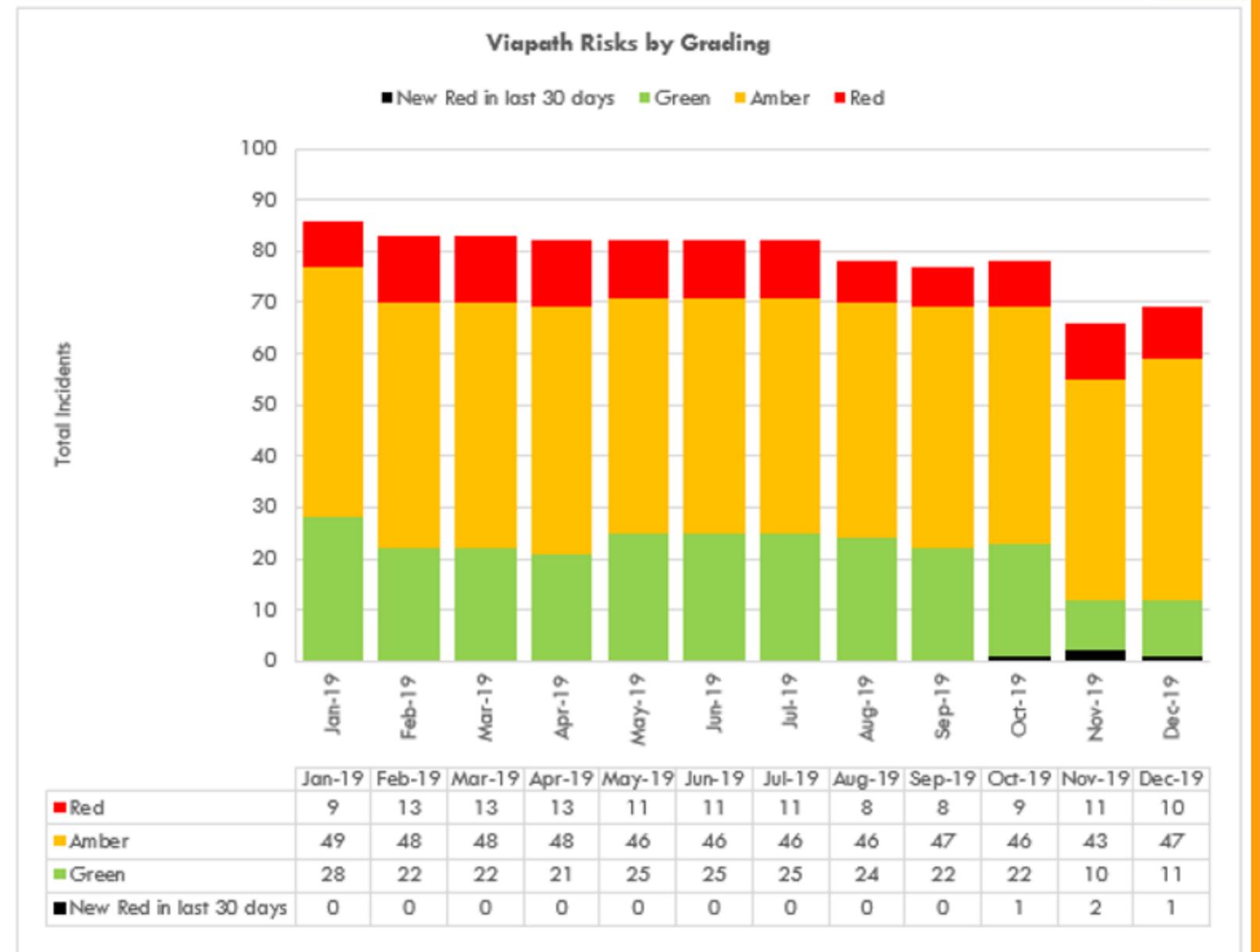


Table 3: Viapath Risks by Grading.

Accreditation and Regulation

There are a number of external inspections from regulatory and accreditation agencies that regularly visit Viapath sites. They include:

- CQC Care Quality Commission
- MHRA Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
- UKAS United Kingdom Accreditation Service
- HTA Human Tissue Authority
- PHE Public Health England
- HSE Health & Safety Executive

You can read more about how they inspect healthcare organisations in the Viapath 2014 Quality Account in the Key Assurance and Regulatory Bodies section.

The CQC did not visit any sites in Viapath in 2019. You can assess the reports from their last visits in 2013 on their website.

In 2018 UKAS completed all their assessments of Viapath laboratories transitioning from Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA), to the international ISO15189:2012 standards. In 2019, two of our laboratories commenced their second four-year accreditation assessment cycle.

Viapath laboratory services site	Date CQC report issued
Bedford Hospital, Bedfordshire	16 January 2013
Guy's Hospital, London	11 April 2013
St Thomas' Hospital, London	11 April 2013
King's College Hospital - Denmark Hill site, London	29 March 2013
King's College Hospital - Princess Royal University Hospital site, Kent	Not inspected yet

Table 4: CQC Inspections.



In January 2019, the St John's Dermatopathology and Immunodermatology laboratories at GSTT underwent their UKAS re-assessment visit. These laboratories had held accreditation with UKAS to ISO15189:2012 since 2015 and had therefore reached the end of their first four-year UKAS cycle of assessment visits. The laboratory teams, under the leadership of the Laboratory Managers Dr Guy Orchard and John Mee, and Quality Manager Fiona Denham, gave an excellent demonstration of their services at the assessment and received very positive feedback from the UKAS Assessors. Only nine mandatory findings were raised at the assessment and following clearance of these findings based on the evidence submitted by the laboratories, renewal of accreditation for these laboratories to ISO15189:2012 was granted by UKAS in May 2019.

Our microbiology laboratory at Bedford also underwent their re-assessment later in the year, again demonstrating excellent practice and we are delighted that they also had their accreditation renewed by UKAS.

No critical findings have been raised by the MHRA in 2019 who inspected our blood transfusion services at GSTT and KCH.



Dr Guy Orchard



Fiona Denham



Health & Safety

In 2019 Viapath's Health & Safety team focussed on continuous improvement by developing the culture of personal and local ownership of health and safety priorities.

Culture and ownership is a critical factor for an organisation to be successful in promoting good health and safety practices. In 2018, additional training was provided to support local H&S teams; helping employees to identify hazards and adopt safe work practices, help avoid the personal and financial costs that accidents and ill-health cause, build a positive culture in which unsafe or unhealthy working is not tolerated, enable employees to identify ways to improve H&S management and assist the business in meeting our legal duty to protect the health and safety of employees' and others.

During 2019, the Health & Safety team worked with the Learning & Development team to provide a portfolio of training courses provided by the British Safety Council. The training program comprised 12 courses ranging from general awareness to those which are qualification based for all staff. The training incorporates many elements of health, safety and wellbeing including risk assessment, COSHH assessment, manual handling assessor, Display Screen Equipment assessors, IOSH managing and working safely.

In addition, Viapath focused on the provision of first aid across the organisation by identifying and training two in-house trainers who are now able to deliver emergency first aid at work courses to Viapath employees. During 2019 a total of 23 staff attended Viapath Emergency First Aid at Work training and obtained their qualification.

Monitor and measure health and safety performance

In order to measure compliance with health and safety requirements the organisation regularly reviews a number of key performance indicators including health, safety and fire inspection compliance, audit, and incident reporting.

During 2019, a total of 532 health, safety and fire inspections were performed across the organisation with an average compliance of 93%.

Eleven assurance audits were performed in relation to Containment Level 3 facilities, Industrial Denatured Alcohol compliance and Pressure Systems Safety regulations to ensure safe operation of installed inlet gas systems.



Health & Safety Incidents Trend

In 2019 there were 135 H&S related incidents reported, a 13% increase from the year before. All H&S incidents reported in 2019 fell under the category of either no harm or low/moderate harm with five incidents occurring due to equipment/property damage. Overall, the H&S incidents trend is consistent but needle stick/sharps injuries and exposure to hazardous substances continues to be the most commonly reported type of incident.

Health & Safety Needle Stick Incident Trends

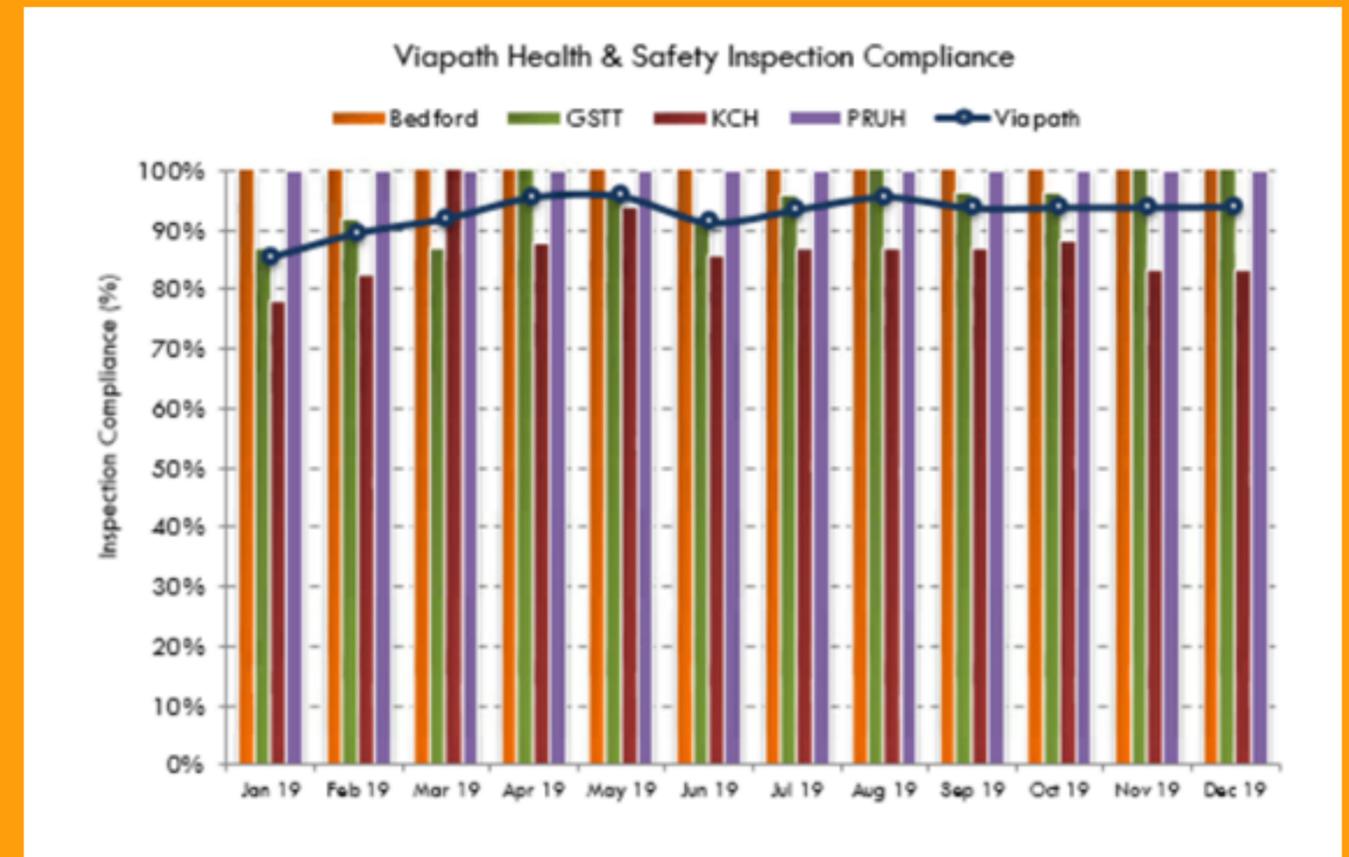
In 2019 Viapath reported 27 needle stick/sharps incidents which accounts for 20% of the overall reported incidents in 2019. The data is showing a reduction in trend of 41% in comparison with 2018 and the business will continue to work with departments to reduce levels throughout 2020.

Health & Safety Objective

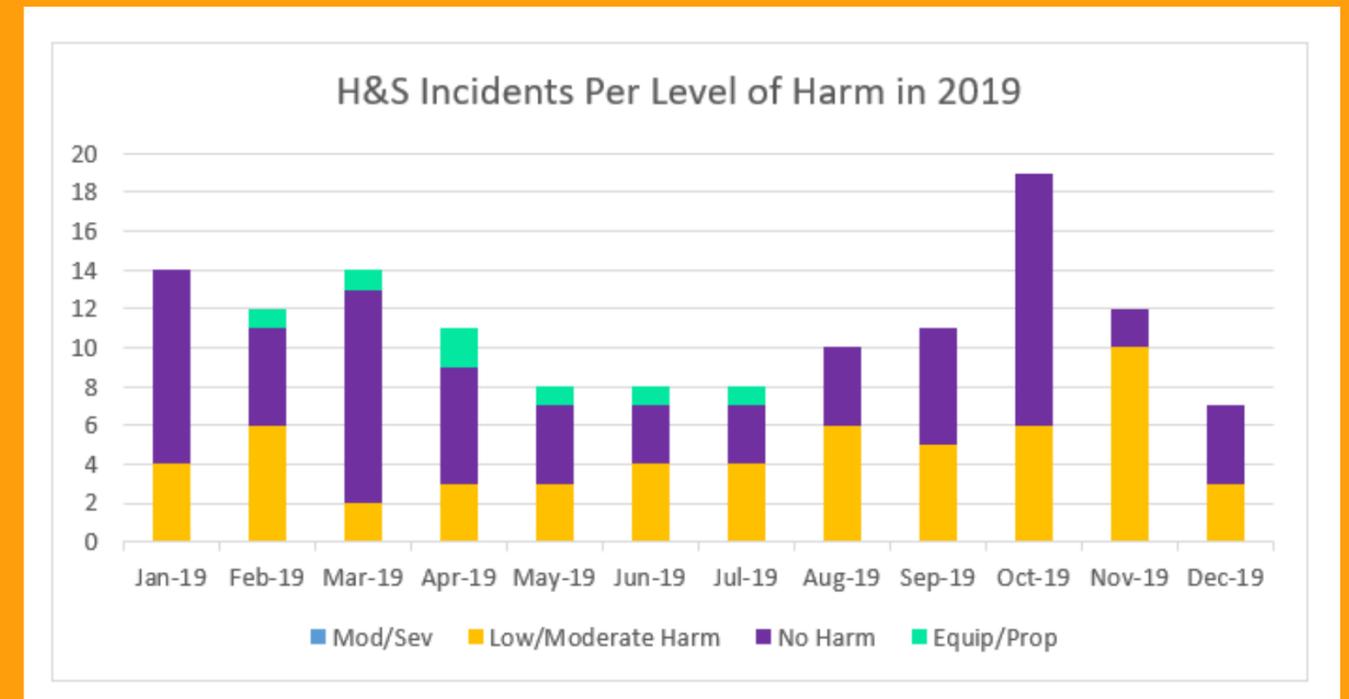
In 2020 Viapath will continue to focus on continual improvement of the health, safety and protection of staff and visitors and achieving legal compliance. This will help Viapath manage health and safety and improve employee safety, reduce workplace risks, and create better, safer working conditions.



Victoria Aruldoss-Hines (H&S)



Graph 1: Viapath health, safety, and fire inspection compliance.



Graph 2: H&S incidents per level of harm in 2018.

Service Improvement

The bespoke Viapath Service Improvement Team (SIT) have expertise in helping services identify issues and change the way services are delivered, in order to be more efficient and effective. They encourage the removal of wasteful processes and help in reducing the unwanted variation of outcomes, by utilising Lean Six Sigma methodology.

Improvement projects typically impact a number of processes and teams, so key people (Subject Matter Experts) involved in each process, will be engaged in improvement activities with Service Improvement. The activities could include process mapping (this helps them understand how and why things are done the way they are) & Demand and Capacity planning (to help determine best use of resources and best practice benchmarks).

Service Improvement then analyse the data, making recommendations and plans with the Subject Matter Experts to improve the service. They then track progress and ensure the improvement project keeps to its schedule for delivery.

The team were involved in fourteen process improvement initiatives and projects in 2019, across multiple sites and departments within the business. Below are some examples of those initiatives that are already providing process improvement/change.

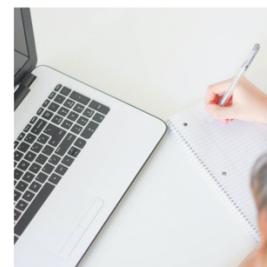
Reference Chemistry - King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

Background:

The Reference Biochemistry laboratory is comprised of six sections and was initially designed to be an open plan "unified" laboratory; however, each section has become exclusive, practically functioning as individual and independent laboratories.

Problem Statement:

There are a few underlying issues within the whole of Reference Chemistry including; staff utilisation, sharing of knowledge needed for analysers, leadership in senior staff and old analysers leading to significant analyser downtime. An end to end review of all six sections will determine fluidity of staffing and ensure all staff have the appropriate training for their defined roles and when working across multiple disciplines.



Improvement/Recommendations:

- Staff Utilisation and Skill Mix

In order to determine whether staff were being utilised efficiently and were capable of cross-discipline working, observations of all roles within each section were conducted, along with Time In Motion Studies. This allowed Service Improvement to recommend a possible staffing restructure and introduce the use of a “Competency Matrix,” to allow Seniors to clearly see competency progress of staff and also the number of staff competent for each task/section within Reference Biochemistry.

- 5S Exercise

One of the other outcomes from the review, from assessing workspace and flow, was to perform a 5S (Sort, Set, Shine, Standardise and Sustain) exercise. This was to allow all sections within the laboratory to remove clutter, improve the working environment and introduce a more standardised approach.

Right (Fig. 1) is an example of the 5S “cycle” used when Service Improvement conduct the training, this training has now become common practice within the business.



Fig. 1

Cytogenetics - King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

Background:

The Cytogenetics laboratory is one of the largest specialist haematological malignancy testing laboratories in the UK and therefore experiences high and ever-increasing demand. From September 2017 to February 2019, the number of overall samples processed within the laboratory saw an increase of 14%.

Problem Statement:

Due to the workload increase, the main issues highlighted were staffing capacity and equipment capacity; which in-turn is leading to turnaround-time delays and large amounts of work-in-progress (WIP).

Improvements/Recommendations:

One of the main issues believed to be contributing to the problems in the laboratory was staffing, but the Service Improvement Team identified, for the most part, this was perception and that equipment and space inefficiencies prevented staff from working to their full capacity. This is a good example of where a perception leads to pre-conceived solutions. The review therefore focussed on space utilisation and equipment and produced 12 recommendations to benefit the department. Since this review in December 2019 Cytogenetics have been meeting or exceeding their three KPIs.

BT Staffing Capacity & Urgent Renal Transplant Pathway – Guy's & St Thomas' Trust

Background:

Following an incident involving an Out Of Hours (OOH) urgent renal transplant sample, Service Improvement were asked to review the pathway for urgent renal samples within Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital Trust (GSTT) Blood Transfusion (BT).

Problem Statement:

The incident occurred in February 2019 when a renal transplant sample was booked in at Guy's Hospital Specimen Reception (SR) and taken to St Thomas' Hospital (STH), Central Specimen Reception (CSR). The time from sample receipt at Guy's SR to the units being issued and final arrival back at Guy's SR, was 4 hours; which is an excessive turn around. The team were also asked to re-assess the staffing capacity recommendation made in a previous project (known within Lean Six Sigma as the "Control Phase").

Improvements/Recommendations:

- Sample Bag

To improve the pathway for urgent renal transplant samples, a colour coded bag was implemented to ease recognition and urgency whilst being processed (Fig. 2).

- Staffing Capacity Model

Due to the annual workload increase within Blood Transfusion, the staffing capacity model created on the back of a project conducted in 2017, was amended to allow the department to perform their own annual capacity review. Highlighting mandatory fields within the model, regular updates could be made to staffing numbers and sample volumes to allow the model to provide accurate results to demonstrate specific staffing requirements.

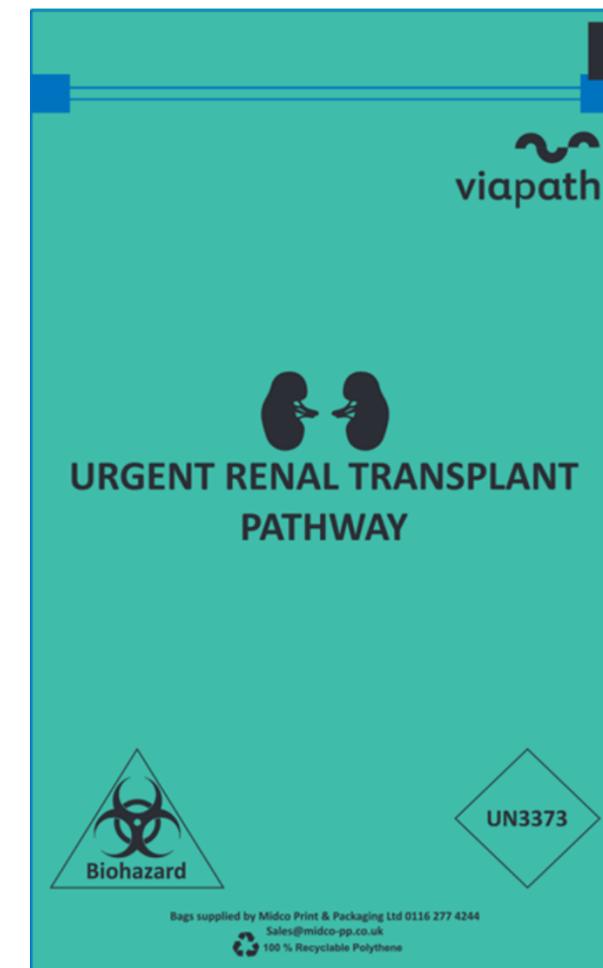


Fig. 2

Tissue Science's Workforce & Laboratory Configuration – Guy's & St Thomas' Trust

Background:

The Head & Neck and Dermatopathology laboratories help clinicians meet the NICE guideline recommendations and nationally monitored cancer Pathway. As part of this guidance patients should see a specialist within two weeks of GP referral: called "2 week wait (2WW)" referral patients. The laboratory prioritises these cases to, either rule out cancer and/or support fast diagnosis and treatment.

Problem Statement:

The Trust expressed concerns about the Turn Around Times (TAT) and its impact on key Cancer 2WW flagged patients (target 87% within 7 days).

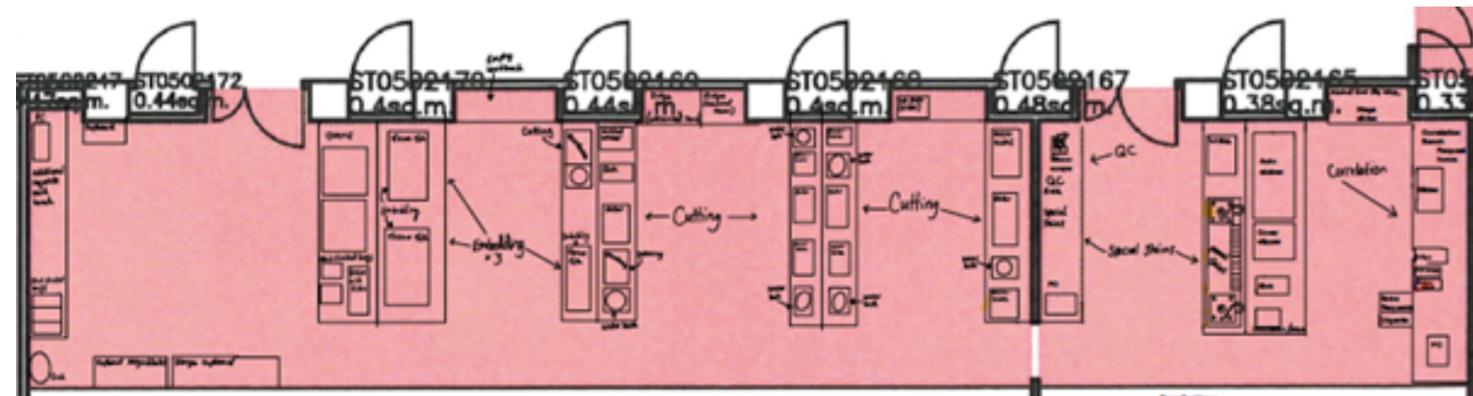
Improvements/Recommendations:

- Time In Motion

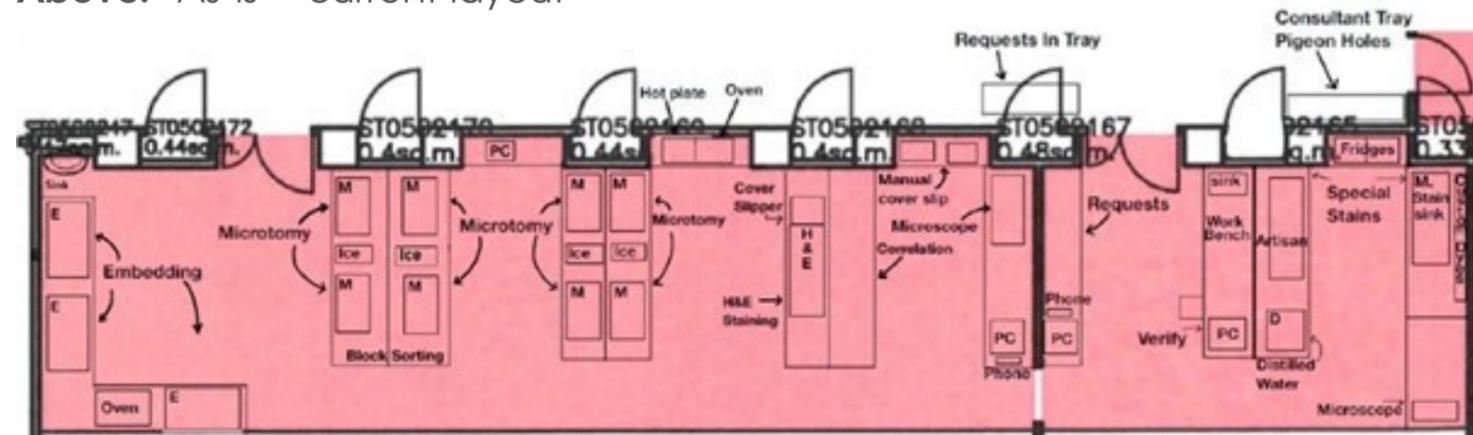
To provide Histology, Head & Neck and Dermatopathology with a comprehensive overview of staff utilisation, the Service Improvement team conducted a Time In Motion study in all three laboratories. This allowed seniors to make an informed decision on where best to allocate staff, at all levels, during peaks and troughs throughout the day.

- Laboratory Re-configuration

The workflow within Histology was reviewed and a recommendation was made to re-configure the current laboratory layout, introducing lean and more efficient processes. Below demonstrates the laboratory's "as-is" (current layout), with the proposed "to-be" (future layout), which would simplify and improve the sample pathway.



Above: "As-is" - current layout



Above: "To-be" - future layout

Patient Journey Video - Corporate

Background:

In April 2019 Viapath launched the PathFocus initiative to reiterate that across Viapath Group, Analytics and Services, we provide high quality pathology services with patients at the centre of pathways and processes. PathFocus also reviewed the quality management processes and introduced an employee handbook/management framework, which will ensure consistent and appropriate leadership across all areas, to support the high quality services provided.

This initiative was supported by a short film showing a "patient's journey" through a chosen pathway and how they are the centre of everything Viapath does.

Improvements/Recommendations:

The change introduced was a patient journey video, coined "Emma," that followed a cancer pathway. The video was narrated from the patient's perspective, with a handoff to the laboratory that demonstrated how the sample was processed. This video is now incorporated into the businesses new staff induction, as the centralised point of focus for all areas whilst they present how their department contributes to the laboratory process and patient journey. "Fig 3" right shows the title screen from the short patient's journey film.

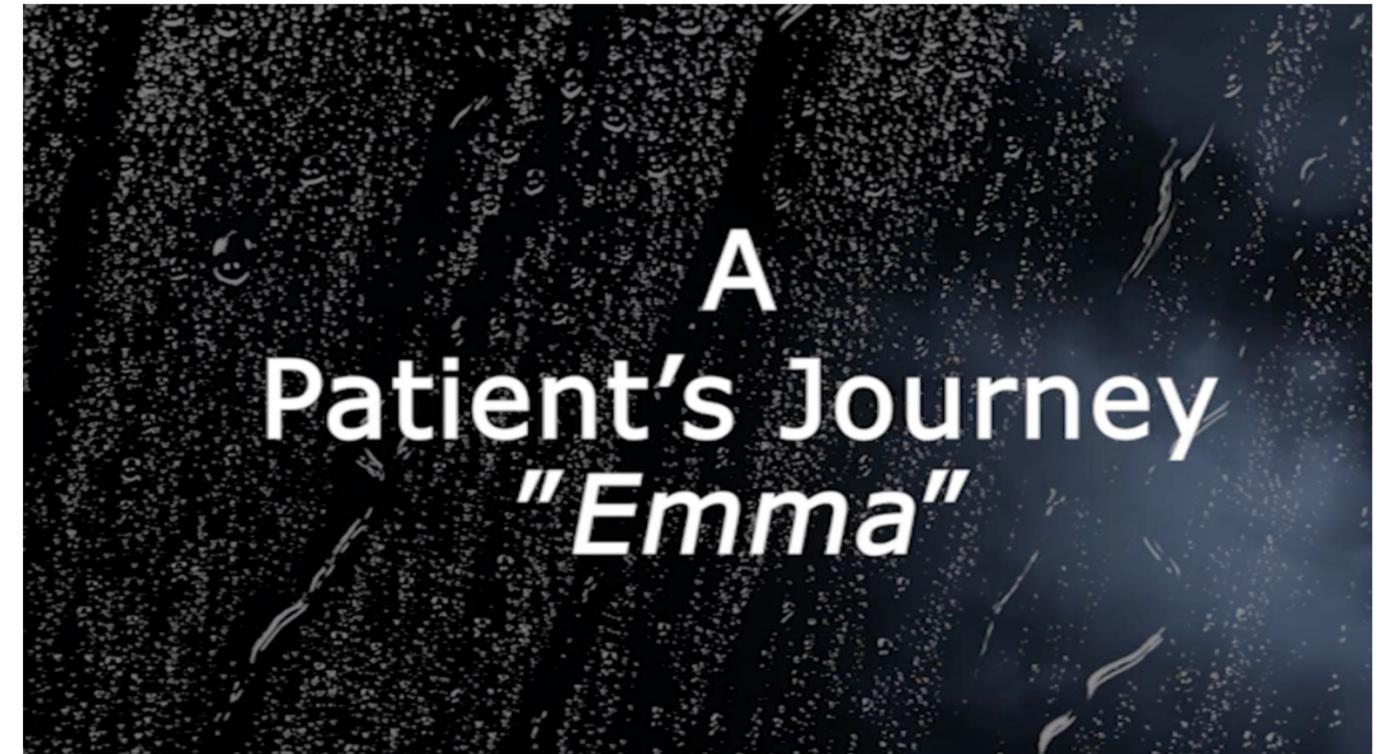


Fig. 3

"The Service Improvement Team (SIT) have expertise in helping services identify issues and change the way services are delivered, in order to be more efficient and effective."

Customer & Patient Experience



Compliments & Complaints

We value hearing what our customers and patients think about our services and to use their feedback to make improvements. Here are some examples of when things didn't go according to plan and what we did about it.

Complaint: Received by the customer service team. Parents of a child patient were concerned and distressed that they had to return to the hospital, so that their child could have another blood test. It had been communicated to them that the blood tests had previously been lost by Viapath Labs.

Response: The investigation identified that the blood samples had in fact been analysed for all the tests requested except for one, which was reported to the GP as haemolysed. Due to the incorrect information being given to the parents, they were understandably anxious and apprehensive. Once the correct information was given to them, they were very relieved by the investigation findings and that the blood test was not repeated unnecessarily.

NHS Patient 9/12/2019

Complaint: A major London Hospital contacted Viapath regarding a delay to reporting for an Alport Syndrome Test which was not available at the time of the patient's Hospital appointment.

Response: A comprehensive investigation was carried out by the Genetics team at Viapath and they identified internal process failings which they promptly addressed. These included:

- Increasing the number of staff available to run the process to ensure reports were available promptly.
- In the event of a delay occurring, the team now communicate directly to clinicians, so that patients receive their results when available and don't have an unnecessary appointment.

Major London Hospital – 06/09/2019

Complaint: A clinician at North Kent Pathology had contacted Maidstone hospital for DPYD genetic results but were informed that as the results were manually inputted on the system this needed to be verified by the original sender from St Thomas' hospital. They then also tried calling the biochemistry department at St Thomas' hospital numerous times but no answer. Pharmacy also tried to get in contact with the oncology consultant at Maidstone but was unsuccessful. The patient had already waited for two hours for treatment. Therefore, treatment had to be delayed by one day due to not having the DPYD results.

Response: The investigation identified that two samples were received from the patient, both were reported well within our stated TAT. Results were emailed on the day the results were reported to the @nhs.net accounts we had been given. To prevent this from occurring again the following actions were completed:

1. North Kent Pathology provided a different @nhs.net email address for results.
2. Made sure that North Kent Pathology and Oncology have direct telephone number for the Purines lab.

North Kent Pathology 18/12/2019

Our teams also get lots of great feedback and we are delighted to share some examples with you.

Background: A patient who was using the DVLA service had been frustrated at the numerous issues and delays that he had experienced during the process. The patient had been told to follow the incorrect processes numerous times and this resulted in a delay in him being able to regain his driving licence which he needed for work purposes. After discussing with multiple individuals within the DVLA and his clinical teams, this issue was finally escalated to the Viapath Head of Customer Services.

Compliment: "I would like to express my appreciation of the manner in which you have finally brought this matter to a positive conclusion. I am also deeply appreciative of the way in which the Head of Customer Services at Viapath prioritised the analysis of the third blood sample. It is almost unbelievable that after seven months of delays, it has taken just a matter of days to get my licence renewal approved and this is entirely due to the efforts made on my behalf. I cannot thank you enough for your support and obvious concern. It is unlikely but if we should ever meet I would like to show my appreciation for your efforts on my behalf in this unbelievable saga."

DVLA Patient 11/09/2019

Compliment: Blood transfusion laboratory GSTT.

"Dear team, Due to an error, the anti D had not been ordered in advance for the clinic. I therefore ordered it on EPR, rang the lab and asked if they could issue it quickly. It was issued within half an hour! Thank you so much, it meant the women were not sitting around waiting for it to come up. I really appreciate it, I know you must be very busy and this was completely our error but you managed to issue it so quickly. I am so grateful – thank you – it was a great job."

GSTT Midwife 11/10/2019

"A surgical patient of ours, became critically ill and required an emergency blood transfusion. This environment can be very chaotic and it seems (from subsequent communication) that the blood bank staff did not get much information from the ward. Despite this, they were able to very quickly get us the blood products that we required and the team are extremely grateful."

Surgical doctor at the PRUH 26/12/2020

"A call to the genetics lab at Guy's from a consultant from a Birmingham Hospital enquiring about SMA (Spinal Muscular Atrophy) & BVVLS (Brown-Vialetto Van Laere Syndrome) testing who said we're a very good lab with very nice staff and he wished he worked here."

Consultant 2019

Compliment: Genetics lab at Guy's.

"Thank you so much for turning this around so quickly – that is amazing! Invaluable info for the doctor to process on her return Tuesday."

Clinical Trials unit, Bristol NHS Foundation Trust 2019

Compliment: KCH Histopathology.

"The Viapath Histopathology team kindly allowed us use of their facilities while our own specimen dissection room underwent a renovation from 20/05/19 to 03/07/19 (6 weeks)."

Manager of KCH Liver Histopathology Laboratory on 25/07/2019

Compliment: KCH Blood Transfusion laboratory.

"The BTL received a compliment from the Paediatric trauma team / anaesthetists who dealt with a child's emergency on 08/08/2019. They were complimentary in how effective the new emergency policy was implemented and how the BTL supported the clinical team with the issue of blood/blood products."

KCH Paediatric trauma team/anaesthetists 08/08/2019

Background: A consultant had become increasingly frustrated when samples had been reported as lost or not received, on multiple occasions. This was causing delays to patient treatment and children being re-bled unnecessarily. A thorough investigation identified where the issue was occurring and preventative measures were introduced that had a positive impact on the consultant's patients.

Compliment: "You are a star. That's been so helpful, J (customer service team member). Really appreciate your ownership. We need people like you who take their responsibility so well and see through the tasks."

*Consultant Paediatric Rheumatologist Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital
29/10/2019*

Background: The viral Hepatitis Outreach team had been experiencing issues obtaining results in a timely and efficient manner which caused delays to patient treatment and also additional workload to their teams.

Compliment: "Thank you all very much, your service has been a great help this year and ensure we have been able to offer a vital service to our patients. Have a great Christmas all."

*Viral Hepatitis Outreach Clinical Nurse Specialist at King's College
Hospital 20/12/2019*

Compliment: Virology team.

GSTT email received thanking the Virology team for all your hard work with the M gen testing. She was delighted to feedback that this week, the team had achieved very positive turnaround times - a big improvement. She goes on to say, "Whatever magic you have deployed, I hope it can be sustained".

*GSTT Consultant GU/HIV physician and Audit research lead,
2019*

Compliment: KCH Reference chemistry.

"I am a junior doctor myself and not only did this experience reassure me about my own healthcare, it inspires me to encourage my own teams to follow this shining example of how a great team is made up of great individuals working together with their patient"

KCH junior doctor 2019

Compliment: GSTT Infection sciences team.

Email from transplant surgeon, thanking the team for coming in to do the NAT testing on the deceased donor. The organ was successfully transplanted. "Thanks again for your hard work and expertise - the transplant team (and our patient!) are very, very grateful."

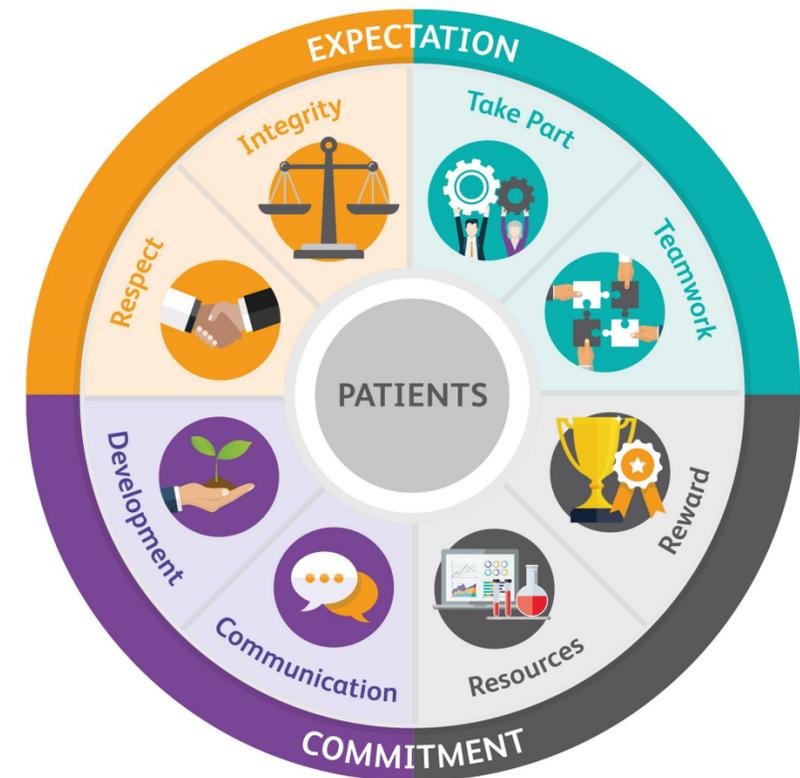
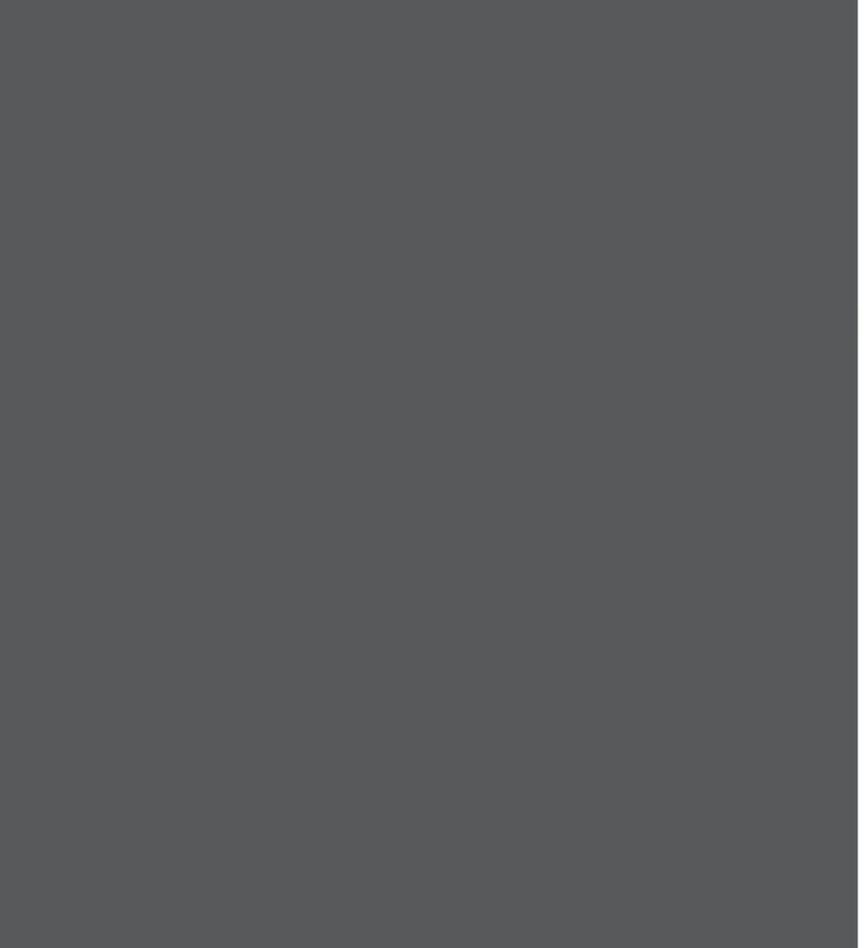
GSTT transplant surgeon 2019

Compliment: GSTT Infection sciences team - laboratory training day.

"Thank you very much for accommodating me for lab module in Feb 2019. All staff and BMS were very helpful, accommodative & informative. It was a very informative module I will remember in my career. Thanking you and the lab team."

GSTT ST5 doctor February 2019

Our People Progress



Human Resources Director Mary Fitzgerald

2019 saw Viapath's HR and Internal Communications teams respond to new challenges such as supporting our EU employees through Brexit and further consideration of what the workforce of the future will look like.

Our journey to embed **The Viapath Way** – the cultural ambition we aim to achieve – gathered pace as we re-designed our annual appraisal process and supporting materials (forms, guidance and videos) to include an assessment of employee behaviours against the standards we set out in our employee guide. We also enjoyed seeing teams embrace the concept and innovatively begin to use The Viapath Way references in activities such as in our Viapath Quality Day events – where they used it in the form of a large jigsaw puzzle and a 'Count Down' clock!

2019 also saw the HR team give attention to supporting Viapath employees to focus on patients. Patients sit at the heart of The Viapath Way ambition – and an important HR intervention has been revitalising our employee induction. This now includes a video – 'patient's journey' and presentations that are much more focused on how everything we do at Viapath contributes to patient care at our customers' hospitals and other locations.

Early in 2019 I was pleased with a 54% response rate to our 2019 **employee pulse survey**, and even more pleased to see a 70% engagement score – up 4% on the previous year.



Mary Fitzgerald

Mary Fitzgerald

Human Resources Director

The survey allows employees to share their feedback about our organisation and ideas and suggestions about how we can improve. Wellbeing was an action area from the survey that is important to our employees, and to us, and so we set about introducing some Wellbeing resources for our employees including regular updates in the form of hints, tips and links to key topics, such as sleep, exercise and mental health. Additionally, we have re-worked our employee benefits portal to better reflect our Health and Financial Wellbeing benefits and we have also introduced some new ideas such as 'payroll-giving'.

With pathology skills continuing to be in short supply the Recruitment team support Viapath's managers to recruit the best scientific brains into Viapath. In the middle of the year they held a fantastic Recruitment Fair with 74 delegates attending on the evening. I am delighted to share that feedback was excellent and 27 of the delegates now work for Viapath either permanently or through our Staff Bank.

The team has also been instrumental in helping to find roles for those that have completed Viapath's Accelerated Graduate Training Programme. All twelve participants have graduated from this highly sought after programme and we are delighted that ten have remained to continue their careers with Viapath. Testimony to the effort that Viapath is putting into 'growing our own scientists'.

A new addition to the internal communications team, alongside the rollout of our newly enhanced IT infrastructure, provided the impetus and resources to set about designing, building and implementing **ViaNet**, our first ever intranet.



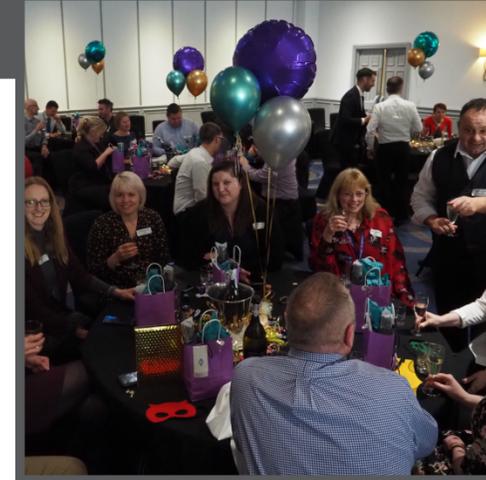
Aside from the obvious improvement in providing employees with engaging communication, there has been a marked impact on making it easier for employees to stay both informed and connected while also being able to more easily navigate our organisation – using, for example, a dynamic News feature, people directory and toolkit.

During Q4 the HR and Payroll teams were working hard to get ready for a major upgrade of our MyHR system, which since its implementation two years ago has become a really important part of the way we manage employees and provide them with self-service arrangements for booking holiday and updating personal information.

Now an important event in our Viapath calendar, our annual Viapath Heroes Awards process took place through the late Summer and Autumn with around 25% of our workforce receiving nominations from their colleagues. Many more employees helped with the judging, particularly for our prestigious, All Star Award. The Awards ceremony itself took place in December and the Internal Communication team again demonstrated their innovation and their new-found IT skills to help around 150 of us all enjoy using ‘in the moment’ online polling, watching video messages from around the organisation and preparing delightful goody bags to help everyone to celebrate the hard work, dedication and achievements of around 45 Viapath individuals and teams.

Achieving our financial target at the end of 2019 meant we were able to end 2019 on a high, providing every employee with a £25 shopping voucher for Christmas, and to start January in a very positive way through our Viapath Incentive Plan paying out £500 to every eligible employee. The Viapath Incentive Plan is an important element of our reward package and represents a significant pay enhancement for many people.

In short 2019 was a really inspiring year seeing so many of our big ambitions begin to bear fruit.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our contributors to the 2019 Quality Account.

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