

Press Release - Embargo 00.01hrs 10 December 2014

In-house Immunohistochemistry restarts at Sherwood Forest Hospitals

Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust will recommence in-house immunohistochemistry testing (excluding Breast Hormone receptor testing) at King's Mill Hospital. This is as a result of improvements and progress made within Sherwood Forest Hospitals' histopathology service in the two years since a Care Quality Commission (CQC) review in December 2012 performed by The Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH) and Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS).

The immunochemistry service at King's Mill Hospital undertakes a range of immunohistochemistry tests to help to diagnose and exclude all types of cancer and since the CQC report two years ago, to ensure patient safety, has been sending these cases for testing to another hospital.

The decision to re-start the service was taken on grounds of quality following a visit by RCPATH and the IBMS in October 2014. During the visit, two members of the original CQC review team were impressed with their visit to the laboratory and were satisfied that the recommendations from their report had been implemented.

Dr Rachael Liebmann, Registrar of The Royal College of Pathologists said:

"We were delighted to see for ourselves how enthusiastically the Trust had implemented our recommendations following the inspection in 2012, including crucial improvements to staffing and equipment. We heard from the patients, hospital consultants, quality assurance and breast cancer screening programme leaders that there had been demonstrable improvements to the quality of the pathology service as a result.

"One of the original concerns was that the Trust's governance systems weren't rigorous or robust enough to be able to identify and escalate risks and issues regarding the service. Now, however, the critical work of the laboratory for patient care is clearly supported by the Trust management."

"As a result, The Royal College of Pathologists is satisfied that immunohistochemistry testing can be reintroduced safely at King's Mill Hospital."

Nick Kirk, President, Institute of Biomedical Science said:

"It is most encouraging to see the improvements made at Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, following the recommendations made in The Royal College of Pathologists' report. Robust governance systems and strong quality assurance processes are essential for ensuring safe, high quality pathology services and it is reassuring to see the progress made in these areas by the Trust.

The College's report raised important questions about the organisation of pathology departments and their workload, and the effectiveness of pathology quality assurance. In order to support pathology services in addressing these issues, the IBMS has produced expert advice and guidance for those responsible for the delivery and safety of pathology services. The Institute will continue to support our members in driving the quality agenda



forward; ensuring commissioners, clinicians and the public can be assured of the quality of pathology services and test results.”

Dr M Shafiq Gill, Head of Service for Cellular Pathology at Sherwood Forest NHS Foundation Trust said: “We are delighted to hear that The Royal College of Pathologists and the Institute of Biomedical Science team are satisfied with our governance and quality management systems. The cellular pathology team at Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has worked very hard to develop appropriate systems which can ensure a high quality and safe diagnostic service. This has been achieved as a result of collaborative work with colleagues across the Trust, including those within the breast service and clinicians. This is in addition to support and guidance from RCPATH, IBMS, East Midlands Breast Quality Assurance Reference Centres (QARC), and regional pathology departments. We would like to thank all of them for their support. An on-site immunohistochemistry service would mean improved or shorter test result turn-around times for our patients”.

The Royal College of Pathologists has a role in laboratory quality assurance through a Joint Working Group which oversees the work of network of National Quality Assurance Assessment Panels. One of the stipulations of restarting the immunochemistry service at King’s Mill is that Sherwood Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust copies reports of their United Kingdom National External Quality Assessment Service (NEQAS) immunohistochemistry performance to the College for the first four cycles following the restarting of the service.

In April 2013, The Care Quality Commission (CQC) published a report into Sherwood Forest NHS Foundation Trust following a detailed inspection to look into concerns about breast cancer hormone test results. The report incorporated specialist input including a [review by The Royal College of Pathologists and the IBMS](#) of Cellular Pathology services and quality assurance systems surrounding Sherwood Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

As part of the inspection The Royal College of Pathologists was asked to investigate concerns that the treatment of women with breast cancer, between 2004 and 2011, may have been based on incorrect test results. The College team found that this had not been the case but were concerned about some aspects of the management of the cellular pathology service responsible for these tests. Recommendations were made regarding laboratory, trust and national approaches to breast cancer hormone receptor testing many of which have already been implemented.

Reports from the CQC on standards at [King’s Mill Hospital](#) and [Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#).

Ends

For further information/photos please contact The Royal College of Pathologists’ Press and Communications Office on 020 7451 6752. Mobile: 0757 834 9018 or email: samantha.jayaram@rcpath.org.

Notes for editors

- The Royal College of Pathologists is a professional membership organisation committed to setting and maintaining professional standards and to promoting excellence in the practice of pathology. As well as medically qualified members, the College has scientists amongst its membership and represents 19 pathology specialties. It has over 10,000 members who are senior staff in hospital laboratories, universities and industry, worldwide.
www.rcpath.org and www.ilovepathology.org

- The College is a registered charity and is not a Trade Union. It does not negotiate the terms of employment of its members.
- The Institute of Biomedical Science is the professional body for biomedical scientists in the United Kingdom. With over 20,000 members it aims to promote and develop the role of biomedical science within healthcare to deliver the best possible service for patient care and safety. www.ibms.org
- The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) has published a series of benchmark guidance and policy documents for laboratory service <https://www.ibms.org/go/media/news.779>