PRESS RELEASE

New Pathology Service formed for south west London
Partnership between three NHS Trusts

The Chief Executives on behalf of the Boards of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust have today signed an agreement to join their current pathology services together to form a new pathology partnership called South West London Pathology.

The service will go live on 1st April 2014 and will be jointly owned and managed by all three Trusts. It will provide pathology services to two million people across south west London and has been set up as a ‘hub and spoke’ delivery model, which was recommended as good practice by the Carter review of NHS pathology and the Modernising Pathology in London Programme.

This way of working will improve both the quality and efficiency of pathology services for hospitals and for GPs across south west London. The main hub laboratory will be at St George’s Hospital. Spoke laboratories or ‘hot labs’ will be run at both Croydon and Kingston to manage urgent local work from A&E, maternity, acute wards and theatres. This model will also enable local knowledge and clinical expertise to be retained within each Trust.

More than 70% of medical decisions in the UK are based on a pathology test and the new service is expected to carry out nearly 16 million tests a year.

Kate Grimes, Chief Executive of Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and the Senior Responsible Officer for the programme said:

“I am delighted that we have been able to form a partnership with Croydon and St George’s to provide pathology services to all of the patients and communities we serve. By joining forces, the new partnership will improve the service for all patients and users and make the most of the investment in new technology and equipment. This will give staff and patients access to some of the best pathology tests and methods of analysis available. The model we have adopted also means that each of the three Trusts will still have access to pathology services and also onsite expertise and specialist knowledge.”
The new partnership will help to streamline patient pathways and improve patient experience as test results will be available to all clinicians across the sector, resulting in fewer tests needing to be duplicated, and patients receiving their diagnoses and treatment more quickly.

The new service will be established in phases and gynae cytology, which is the cervical smear service, will be the first specialty to be fully merged and integrated by 1st April 2014. Microbiology, Clinical Blood Sciences and Histopathology (only Croydon’s service, as Kingston’s Histopathology services will remain at the Trust) will be phased in between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015. Staff who currently work within these services at Kingston and Croydon will have their employment contracts transferred to St George’s on the 1st April 2014, and some will then physically move to main hub laboratory as the services transfer.

Ends.

For media enquiries please contact Lisa Ward, SW London Pathology Communications Lead, 020 8934 2019/ lisa.ward@kingstonhospital.nhs.uk