



Regulation 28: Response to prevent future deaths - Response	
<b>Date:</b>	23 April 2020
<b>Coroner:</b>	Zafar Siddique, Senior Coroner, for the coroner area of the Black Country.
<b>Inquest:</b>	Death of Ms Jennifer McKoy. Inquest date 19 February 2020
<b>Matters of concern:</b>	Evidence emerged during the inquest that there was an inadequate audit process in place for monitoring non-suspicious samples by way of dip-sampling.
<b>Action should be taken:</b>	In consultation with the Black Country Hospital Trusts the Black Country Pathology Services may wish to review their audit/ dip-sampling processes for both suspicious and non-suspicious samples.

## 1. Background:

Black Country Pathology Service (BCPS) is a partnership, across the four NHS providers within the Black Country. BCPS is hosted by The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trusts and was established in October 2018. Since then, there has been a planned transition period in which pathology services are being migrated to the target operating model. As part of the transition all histology services currently spread across 4 sites will be consolidated together and based at the New Cross Hospital site in Wolverhampton; this includes the clinical histopathology team. The aim is to provide a more robust pathology service across the BCPS.

The BCPS inherited a number of issues regarding the histology services, mainly associated with the national shortage of Histopathologist; this was of particular concern at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust (WHT) site. Several of the Consultant Histopathologists at Walsall had retired and returned and were working an excessive number of PA's (15 PA's), which was not sustainable long term. The Walsall Histology Clinical Lead also left for a new post outside the BCPS, increasing the risk level.

Reporting turnaround times for histology cases across the BCPS were not meeting the recommended standard stated by the Royal College of Pathologists, resulting in a backlog of cases (backlog varied across the various sites). As such there was significant pressure from the Trusts to improve turnaround times especially for patients on cancer pathways.

Both WHT and BCPS recorded the reporting pressures in histology on their risk registers; BCPS also raised the risk regarding the issues around the recruitment and retention of Consultant Histopathologists, with particular concern at the Walsall site.

As a result of the concerns around the service provision at WHT the decision was made to move the service to RWT earlier than planned as part of the BCPS reconfiguration.

Across the entire Black Country region, all malignant cases are reviewed at the appropriate MDT.



To support quality assurance systems within histology, a programme of Southampton audits had been in place at RWT. The audits involved the review of both malignant and benign cases (equivalent to 2% of the workload) to assess the technical and clinical quality of the individual departments. Due to the pressures to meet cancer targets, staffing shortages and increased activity, the audit programme was not maintained. To rectify the slippage in the Southampton audit programme, the BCPS has revised the audit programme and methodology across the network to ensure the programme is achievable and provides assurances for both malignant and benign cases. The audit programme incorporates:

- A review of all histology multi-disciplinary team meeting cases, prior to MDT, to provide quality assurance for all malignant cases.
- A modified Southampton audit programme, which audits 2% of the workload selected from non-malignant cases to cover benign cases; both the technical and clinical quality of the laboratories are reviewed.



## Black Country Pathology Services

### 2. Actions taken:

	Action	Comment	Status
1	Case review audit of the pathologist responsible for the interpretation and reporting error of this incident.	No clinical relevant errors were identified.	Completed
2	Case review audit of non-cancerous WHT cases reported over 2 month period.	No clinical relevant errors were identified.	Completed
3	Formal process in place to document any discrepancies identified during routine review of malignant cases in preparation of multidisciplinary team meetings to assess individual pathologists performance.	Final site in process of instigating.	Partial
4	Commenced audit (modified Southampton audit) of the technical and clinical quality of non-malignant cases; accounts to 2% of workload activity at each site across the BCPS.	Cases audited on monthly basis. Audit commenced from January 2020 cases.	Completed
5	Clinical audit lead from each site collates modified Southampton and malignant case audit data and presents findings bi-monthly to the BCPS histology clinical meeting.	Meeting schedule in place and minutes of meetings documented.	Completed
6	Implement audit of cases outsourced to the private sector for reporting, to assess the quality and accuracy of reporting.	Historical audit of outsourced cases from RWT completed. Frequency of audit dependant on outsourcing of cases.	Completed
7	Recruitment of Consultant Histopathologists to fill vacancies to achieve full workforce establishment.	7 additional Consultants recruited since BCPS formed.	Ongoing
8	Additional support for clinical teams across BCPS (including WHT Histology prior to relocation) from RWT clinical team and UHB. • Laboratory Information System (LIMs) installed at RWT Histology lab to enable remote reporting across the network.		Completed
9	Accelerated the relocation plan of Walsall histology laboratory (including clinical staff) to the Wolverhampton site as part of the national	Improved robustness of histology services at Walsall, including greater support for	Completed October 2019

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pathology consolidation programme.

histopathologists (easier access to second opinions from peers, supported MDT attendance, workload management).

### 3. Actions proposed to be taken:

	Action	Comment	Target date of completion
1	Complete implementation of audit at remaining BCPS site for the routine review of malignant cases in preparation of MDT meetings.	Currently implementing on all sites; this involves moving from previous audit process to new audit process.	31 May 2020
2	Complete modified Southampton audits roll out.	Currently implementing on all sites; this involves moving from previous audit process to new audit process.	31 May 2020
3	Audit of cases outsourced to the private sector for reporting, to assess the quality and accuracy of reporting across entire BCPS.	No cases outsourced for reporting.	As required
4	Recruitment of Consultant Histopathologists	Consultant Histopathologist post to continue to be advertised on a regular basis until the service is fully established.	Continue until fully established
5	Improve pathways to notify BCPS of increasing cancer work due to waiting list initiative's etc. which then impact directly on the lab and histopathology consultants.	Raised at STP Cancer Group meeting-contact emails to be shared.	31 May 2020