

Creating a pathology network for West Yorkshire and Harrogate

Pathology Programme Board response to Staff Feedback Report - 9 July 2019

Thank you to everyone who attended the workshops or sent in feedback via the pathology email. It has been extremely helpful to see all the views from staff and to understand what concerns there are in more detail. Hopefully, you will have seen the copy of the Feedback Report, which was shared last week, along with a copy of the presentation from the workshops.

We have reviewed the report and agreed a number of actions in conjunction with the Collaborative Group, as set out below.

Criteria

- **Additional criteria**

In response to the feedback on criteria for scoring, we have added logistics as one of the specific areas to be assessed and scored for each potential model. There was some discussion around environmental impact, which had not been considered previously as a criterion, and it was felt that this should also be included. Having reviewed the other suggestions, they mainly relate to one of the existing criteria so we have noted these as areas to consider when scoring and will ensure the others are considered as part of the implementation planning.

- **Weightings**

In line with the general consensus from the workshops, we have prioritised Quality, Workforce and Achievability and given these criteria higher weightings.

- **Considerations**

We have also carefully reviewed the feedback regarding factors to be considered for each of the criteria. In particular, we noted the emphasis staff placed on improving quality and meeting turnaround times, and concerns around maintaining sample quality if they needed to be transported over greater distances. Similarly, we have heard the concerns raised around disruption for staff and the issues this could cause and recognise this needs to be considered very carefully.

Potential models

- Benefits and risks

We have taken on board the points made by staff when discussing the benefits and risks of the potential models for each discipline, particularly the concerns raised regarding logistics, maintaining quality and increasing travel time for staff. As explained above, these have been built into the scoring criteria and we will make sure they are thoroughly considered when assessing the short-listed models.

- Microbiology

We also noted the concern raised about why a three hub model wasn't being considered for microbiology as it was for other disciplines. This had not been taken forward based on two factors. First, advice from the consultant microbiologists that clinically fewer hubs offer more advantages and a single hub would be feasible. Second, that it would not be viable to invest in full laboratory automation if the volume of activity in each hub is too low and in a three hub model the volume in each hub would be lower than is usually processed on fully automated systems. However, we have asked for the evidence supporting these factors to be presented to the Programme Board for a formal decision.

Other common themes

- We have heard very clearly the concerns raised regarding increased travel for staff and fears of becoming deskilled. While we have to balance a number of considerations, retaining and recruiting pathology staff is one of the key drivers for developing the network and – as reflected in the criteria weightings – workforce is a priority focus. We greatly value the skills and experience we have in our pathology teams and would like to assure you that we will take into account the issues you have raised when assessing the different models and that our aim is to preserve employment in the NHS for all staff.
- A number of staff stressed the importance of keeping staff involved in this process, which we are committed to doing. The Programme Board has asked for regular updates on feedback from staff to be brought to our meetings and will continue to ensure that staff are kept updated on progress and have the chance to comment on and shape developments.

Thank you again for all your feedback; your involvement is vital to help us determine the best approach for the network and will continue to be essential as we develop the plans fully over the coming weeks and months.