Scottish Pathology Network

Annual Report

2022/23

Lead Clinician: Dr Stuart Thomas (to Nov 2022), Dr Lorna Cottrell (From Feb 2023)
Network Scientific Manager: Amanda Malham
Programme Manager: Camilla Young
Programme Support Officer: Bina Collins

Introduction

Managed Diagnostic Networks are defined as *co-ordinated groups of health professionals that support diagnostic services to continuously improve service delivery, in order to ensure equitable provision of high quality, clinically effective services.* Diagnostics, whether delivered in primary, community or secondary care, has an important role to play in achieving NHS Scotland quality ambitions by contributing to early, accurate and cost effective diagnosis, monitoring and self-management.

The role of the Scottish Pathology Network (SPaN) is to improve cellular pathology services by developing and delivering a workplan, that will:

- Steer modernisation, including service change and redesign
- Improve quality
- Support provision of effective and equitable cellular pathology service
- Anticipate and respond to user needs and future requirements (and)
- Fosters cross-board communications for departments to meet national guidelines and ISO 15189 Standards

Current Position

In November 2022 Dr Stuart Thomas tenure as Lead Clinical came to an end. Dr Thomas had provided clinical leadership to the network since 2019. February 2023 saw the network welcome Dr Lorna Cottrell as the new Lead Clinician.

SPaN achieved 100% of its set objectives in 2022/23.

The Network continued to make use of technology and remote communications to progress work this year. This has continued to be effective, saving time on travel and promoting economically friendly practices.
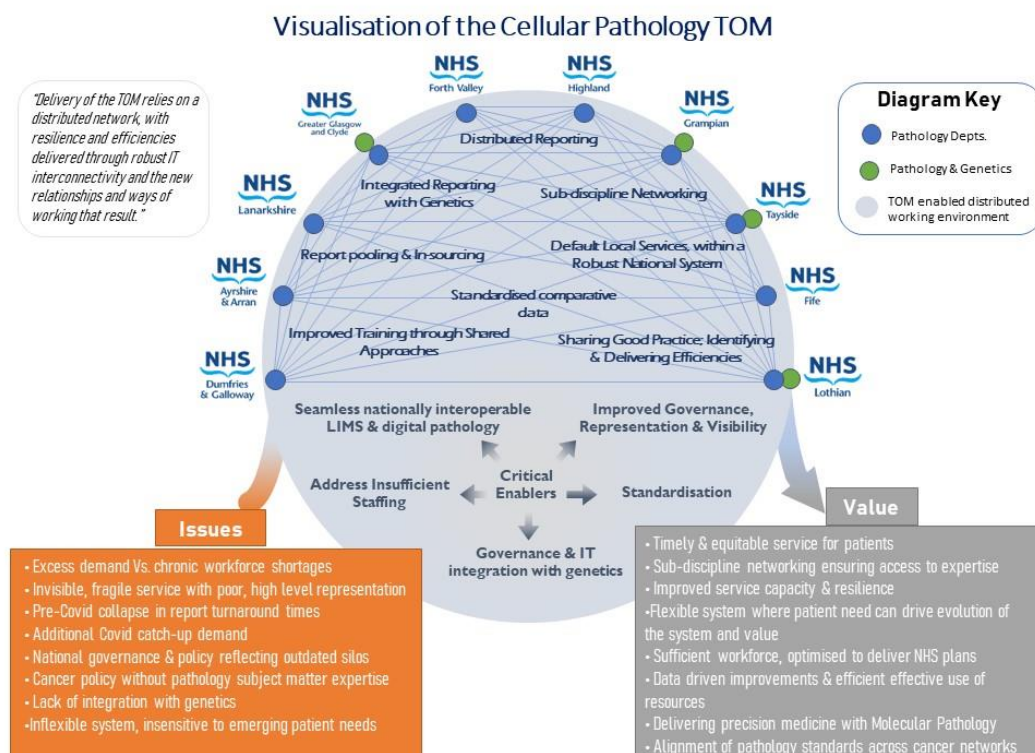
Highlights

Target Operating Model

In June 2022 Target Operating Model (TOM) for Cell Pathology was endorsed by the Diagnostics in Scotland Strategic Group (DiSSG).

The TOM was developed in collaboration with a wide spectrum of stakeholders and drew on their input to describe how the service should look in the future. At a high level, the TOM defines the collective recommendations, vision and principles, along with a governance model.
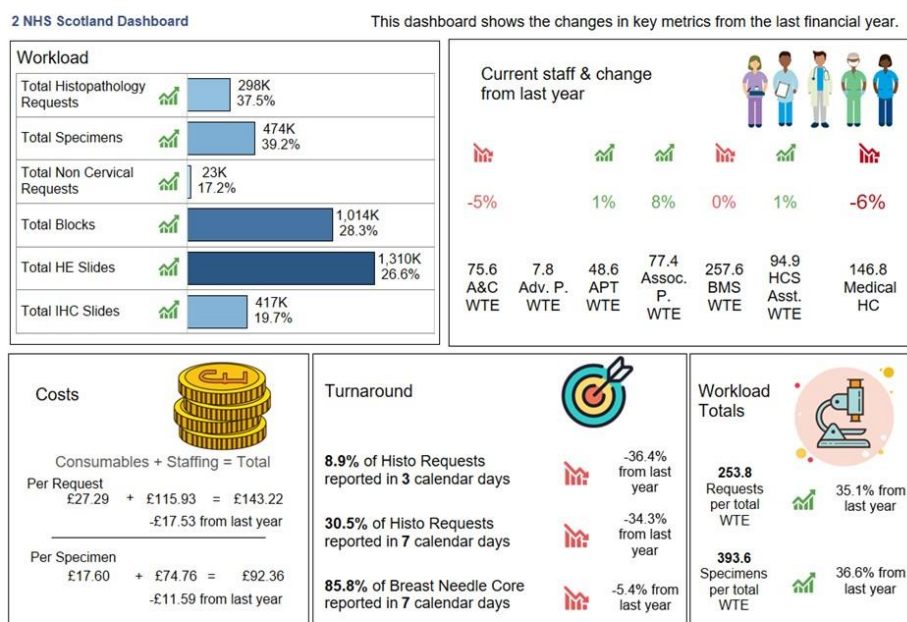
The vision of **"A world class, sustainable pathology service, that continually supports the health & wellbeing of the people of Scotland***"* can be achieved by implementing the collective

recommendations outlined in the model. The recommendations were created to address existing on-going challenges departments currently face whilst delivering a patient-centred service.

Visualisation of the Cellular Pathology TOM

Benchmarking

This year marked further successful collaboration between SPaN's Network members and the Information Management Service (IMS) in relation to quality and performance benchmarking. The report provides an insight into the performance of individual pathology departments, set in the context of other NHS Health Boards in Scotland. Some data is also displayed against the Royal College of Pathologists turn-around times. This is the latest Scotland wide benchmarking report.

2 NHS Scotland Dashboard — This dashboard shows the changes in key metrics from the last financial year.

Workload

Metric		Value	Change
Total Histopathology Requests	📈	298K	37.5%
Total Specimens	📈	474K	39.2%
Total Non Cervical Requests	📈	23K	17.2%
Total Blocks	📈	1,014K	28.3%
Total HE Slides	📈	1,310K	26.6%
Total IHC Slides	📈	417K	19.7%

Current staff & change from last year

-5%	1%	8%	0%	1%	-6%
75.6 A&C WTE	7.8 Adv. P. WTE	48.6 APT WTE	77.4 Assoc. P. WTE	257.6 BMS WTE	94.9 HCS Asst. WTE	146.8 Medical HC

Costs

Consumables + Staffing = Total

Per Request
£27.29 + £115.93 = £143.22
-£17.53 from last year

Per Specimen
£17.60 + £74.76 = £92.36
-£11.59 from last year

Turnaround

8.9% of Histo Requests reported in **3 calendar days** — -36.4% from last year

30.5% of Histo Requests reported in **7 calendar days** — -34.3% from last year

85.8% of Breast Needle Core reported in **7 calendar days** — -5.4% from last year

Workload Totals

253.8 Requests per total WTE — 35.1% from last year

393.6 Specimens per total WTE — 36.6% from last year

Feedback from network members indicates the benchmark reports are highly valued. SPaN benefits from the collection of over 10 years of benchmarking data which shows areas of growth in testing for cancer through Immunohistochemistry, increased workload demand and decreased reporting times due to workforce stasis or decline due to vacancies. The SPaN benchmarking allows national and local monitoring of service effectiveness and supports departments to measure their performance against others and a National average.

SPaN benchmarking data is reviewed, and new data collection is performed when areas for monitoring performance or improving quality is identified. Future work will include collecting benchmarking data to support the evaluation of national cancer pathways, including head and neck turn-around times.

Digital Pathology

Digital pathology has the potential to enable an equitable and sustainable service model, utilising cross-boundary reporting to maximise the use of available specialised expertise and resource. Whilst the overall project was not governed within SPaN, the network continued to provide support and expert advice, enabling a national view at the initial stages and surveying the community to ascertain readiness.

9 out of 10 Health Boards that provide pathology services have the Philips Digital Pathology system in place (albeit with significant differences in slide production and digitisation). Utilisation of digital pathology varies markedly across Scotland with some Health Boards reporting digitally for 98% of cases, and other Health Boards at 0%, even with digital systems in place. SPaN has endorsed the establishment of a Digital Pathology Subgroup, with aspirations to develop a National Digital Pathology Strategy to ensure learning can be shared nationally.

Annual Event

In September 2022 SPaN held a successful education event at The Studio in Glasgow. The event was attended by 76 delegates from all Boards in Scotland providing Cellular Pathology services.

The programme included presentations from colleagues in Northern Ireland sharing their work on implementing a successful BMS dissection and reporting service. Delegates also heard an update from a number of Physician's Assistants from NHS Lothian.

The afternoon session was split to allow delegates to either attend a general update on work being progressed through SPaN (including digital pathology and standardisation) or to participate in a BMS dissection sharing session.

30 evaluation forms were received which showed that the event was very well received with presentations scoring an average of 4.6 out of 5.

Delegates were asked to detail what they would look to do differently as a result of attending the event.

What might you do differently as a result of attending the event?
As afternoon sessions were divided and I felt like missing out on dissection talks.
I found it very helpful in my approach to my portfolio preparation.
I learnt that team work is very important in achieving good results.
I liked the documentation that Glasgow are using for dissection training and having a training schedule is a great idea. If the Consultants agree I would like to take more responsibility for signing off BMS dissection training for category B and C specimens as that would speed things up.
I returned to my department with a different perspective on our situation after discovering other departments were struggling with lack of staff as well. Attending also gave me a motivational boost to continue working through my registration portfolio.
I would be keen to discuss in partnership the use of extended roles within Scotland. This is something we have been asking for now for several years and the fact it has been implemented in other boards is reasurring
It will aid my DEP portfolio build and who I may be able to contact for any help or guidance
Look at the BMS structure within the lab and how to change it to support BMS dissection
This event has helped me to improve my approach to work. It has also given me moral boost to pursue my career further in histology in regard to the next steps I need to take to become a specialist BMS and beyond.

Pathology Dissection

Delivering sustainable services was one of the core themes in NHS Scotland Health Care Science National Delivery Plan 2015-2020. One of the major deliverables was to develop healthcare science roles specifically in histopathology, which would support areas of service pressure and have the potential to free up medical capacity.

BMS Dissection SLWG members undertook a comprehensive audit of BMS Dissection activity for a representative 2-week period in a four week period at the end of 2022. There was a 100% engagement and response rate with all Health Boards in Scotland where BMS Dissection is undertaken

The Key metrics captured were grouped into three areas;

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Form 1   B & C Specimens

- Captured the Health Board
- The anonymised BMS doing the work
- The number of pots/parts per specimen examined
- Time taken from start to finish including any associated paperwork
- Total number processed during the session
- Speciality area that was linked to the specimen

Form 2   D & E Specimens

- Captured the Health Board
- The anonymised BMS undertaking the work
- The number of pots/parts per specimen examined
- Time taken from start to finish including any associated paperwork
- Speciality area that was linked to the specimen
- Also whether the BMS was 'in training' or 'Signed off' for Dissection/Block taking and or Opening/ Describing

Form 3   Daily Laboratory Statistics

- The total number and type of specimens undertaken in the individual Laboratory on each day of the audit period.

A full narrative report is being prepared and it is estimated that this will be complete by the end of July 2023 and will be shared with the SPAN Steering group and an action plan developed.

National Collaborative LIMS Specification and Scoring

During 2022/23 SPaN have continued to support the preparatory work required to implement the new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). Activity has focused on the accelerated LIMS implementation for Health Boards. Dr Jamie Wilson (SPaN IT Lead) provided discipline-focussed leadership to the data migration workshops that have taken place to look at high level aims.

As part of standardisation work a data test list from NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde was developed. The data list was used for NHS Fife and mapped to SNOMED CT codes. This provided opportunity to look at the basic coding structure used in NHS Fife.

SPaN will continue to support this work as the new LIMS is rolled out across Scotland over the coming years.

Standardisation

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In order to enhance service quality and patient outcomes, standardisation of pathology reporting will minimise variability. Work has started on a workplan around standardisation. One of the first priorities is to develop agreed RCPath-based data set/proforma reporting templates.

During 2022/23 5 Dermatopathology, 8 Gynaecology, 7 Gastro Intestinal and 3 Thyroid reporting proformas were developed by speciality groups, lead by speciality members of the SPaN standardisation subgroup.

Supporting national cancer developments

SPaN continued to serve as the main point of contact for the Scottish Medicines Consortium, offering expert advice around new companion diagnostic testing. There were 4 requests for advice over 2022/23.

The SPaN community is actively engaged with the development of the Early Lung Cancer Diagnostic pathway.

SPaN leads were also members of National cancer groups such as the Cancer Delivery Board and the National Cancer Recovery Group and Cancer Data Programme Board.

Service sustainability

During summer 2022 the network came together to support service sustainability when it was identified that there was a short-term global shortage of paraffin wax. The network gathered information from all laboratories to support the work of the Scottish procurement team to manage this risk and identify wax suppliers. Members from all Health Boards across Scotland met on a weekly basis to monitor stock levels and ensure that all laboratories were able to continue providing cellular pathology services.

Looking forward – 2023/24

The role of the Scottish Pathology Network (SPaN) is to improve pathology services by:

- steering modernisation, including service change and redesign,
- improving quality
- supporting the provision of an effective cellular pathology service that anticipates and responds to user needs, future requirements and national guidelines.

The Dissection Subgroup will continue to support the following key priorities:

- The further development of the National Dissection Training School Business case in collaboration with Partnership with a view to submitting for funding
- Develop a supportive national network for engaged dissectors (Biomedical Scientists and Pathologists in training) and trainers

- Develop a nationally agreed career structure with model job descriptions
- Support working towards Advanced Practice in all Health Boards
- Look to standardise training, supervision and governance across all Health Boards with the development of a National Framework for BMS dissection
- Establish nationally agreed targets for level of BMS activity and Advance Practice in labs and monitor progress towards this
- Host an annual Dissection Training and Education event
- Support the standardisation work within the SPaN subspecialty groups

SPaN will work to support the successful implementation of the new LIMS, recognising the practical considerations required in liaising and working with the first implementing Health Board(s).

The new Digital Pathology Subgroup will initially invite the wider community to contribute to establish the sub-group priorities, this is likely to include a vision and strategy, which will align with the Pathology TOM. Following the establishment of Digital Pathology priorities, the sub-group membership will be agreed.

The Digital Pathology subgroup priorities are also likely to include operational support including guidance around areas such as whole slide image (WSI) storage and governance structure to develop a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cross-board transfer and reporting of WSI.

Further exploration of Digital Pathology reporting models within other parts of the UK e.g., Northern Ireland, Leeds and Nottingham will increase SPaN networking beyond Scotland.

Similar to the SPaN Dissection sub-group, partnership representation will be requested to join the Digital Pathology sub-group.

Finance
SPaN spent a total of £3,536 from an allocated budget of £5,000.

Venue Hire	£2,974
Travel costs	£453
Printing	£109

Risks & Issues

Clinical pressures mean that there is an ongoing risk that the community may not have time to support the business plan for 2023/24. Progress against the business plan will be actively monitored throughout the year to assess if this becomes an issue.