

MY LAB

HAEMATOLOGY AND BLOOD TRANSFUSION

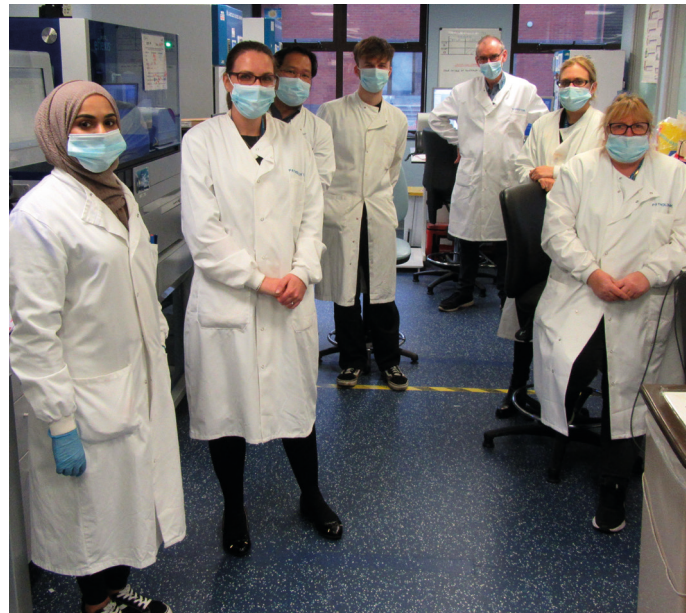
John McNulty, Senior Biomedical Scientist, gives a guided tour of the pathology department St Helens and Knowsley Hospital NHS Trust.

The pathology department at St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (STHK) is responsible for providing pathology services to STHK and the GP practices within the St Helens, Knowsley and Halton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

After a successful merger with the pathology services at Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals NHS Trust (SOHT) in October 2014, the department provides support for the trust as well as Southport and Formby, and West Lancashire GP practices, primarily, performing over 1.6 million tests in haematology and transfusion yearly.

The STHK pathology departments consist of a main hub at Whiston Hospital, where all disciplines are based, and a blood sciences essential services laboratory (ESL) is based at Southport Hospital, with smaller laboratories of limited repertoire at Ormskirk Hospital and St Helens Hospital. Our laboratories are equipped with Sysmex haematology and coagulation analysers and Grifols transfusion analysers.

The sites at Whiston and Southport provide a 24/7 haematology and transfusion service, using a range of automated and manual techniques to perform full blood counts, blood cell



morphology, erythrocyte sedimentation rates, routine coagulation testing, ABO and Rh grouping, antibody screening, patient crossmatching and antenatal screening. Specialist testing is performed at Whiston, including coagulation factor assays, thrombophilia testing, Hb electrophoresis and antibody identification.

Our Ormskirk laboratory offers limited on-site testing, including some haematology and urgent transfusion provision, while the lab at St Helens provides a basic haematology and coagulation service for real-time results to support the haematology and anticoagulation clinics.

The haematology and blood transfusion departments at STHK and SOHT have had great success in recent years with excellent results in successful United

Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) assessments, allowing for continued accreditation to ISO 15189. This is thanks to the continued hard work and organisation of our medical laboratory assistants and biomedical scientists who provide a high-quality diagnostic service over multiple sites.

Staff progression is bolstered by the completion of registration and specialist portfolios, with the majority of staff also completing BBTS Specialist Certificates and significant numbers studying to Master's level.

We also have an education programme of lunchtime presentations.

Our quality management system involves the processing of internal quality controls, including inter-hospital comparison testing, as well as participating in external quality control schemes across haematology and blood transfusion, such as NEQAS and WASPS.

The completion of training logs and annual competency assessments has given us the flexibility to provide a high level of performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ability to react to the changing aspects of healthcare during the pandemic has been essential, and the positive attitude of both teams at the STHK and SOHT sites has allowed for continuous quality improvements during this time. 