

Sonic Healthcare UK Education & Training Annual Report

July 2019 - June 2020



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HEALTHCARE UK

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Cover Image:
Halo Building, Level 5

Inside Image:
Barnet Hospital Rapid Response Laboratory





Introduction

This 2019-20 Annual Education and Training Report covers my first full year with Sonic Healthcare UK and one in which we accomplished so much together and withstood the major threat from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The importance of education and training is never far from the surface in discussions of pathology service delivery now and also when planning for the future.

Throughout the company, all of our staff are encouraged and supported to engage in lifelong learning as well as enhancing our services and their own future prospects with additional skills and qualifications. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic we supported staff to undertake apprenticeships, IBMS registration and specialist portfolios, Diplomas and Masters programmes.

The UK-wide lockdown involved huge changes to the way in which we all work including the introduction of widespread working from home for many office-based staff and many members of staff being furloughed as test volumes dropped significantly in the Spring and Summer of 2020. One constant for those working from home and furloughed was the ability to undertake distance learning. Mandatory training was already undertaken entirely digitally and could be easily accessed from home. During furlough all educational activities could continue unabated unless involving hands on laboratory experience. Face to face training has not been possible during the pandemic, therefore the delivery of inductions and other training activities had to adapt to more on-line delivery methods.

I know I speak for all of the Sonic Healthcare UK staff who have received support and funding for educational and training courses, when I say that I am hugely grateful to all members of the Sonic Education and Training Faculty (see right) and all of those employees and external volunteers who undertake training. Their commitment to training and to passing on their knowledge and experience is a real asset to the company.

The Sonic Educational and Training Faculty membership is:

- Dr Rachael Liebmann, Group Medical Director (Chair)
- Wendy Leversuch, Head of Scientific Training
- Tim Herriman, Group Laboratory Director
- Dr Keith Gomez, Head of Medical Training
- Matthew Gibbins, Head of Human Resources
- Gill Swain-Coad, Learning & Development Co-ordinator
- Beverley Wallace, Staff Side Representative (nominated from our trade union partners)

I am proud to present the Annual Report for 2019 to 2020 which represents the achievements of our trainees and trainers - improving our ability to respond to the challenges of providing pathology support to hospitals, GPs and care homes.

Dr Rachael Liebmann

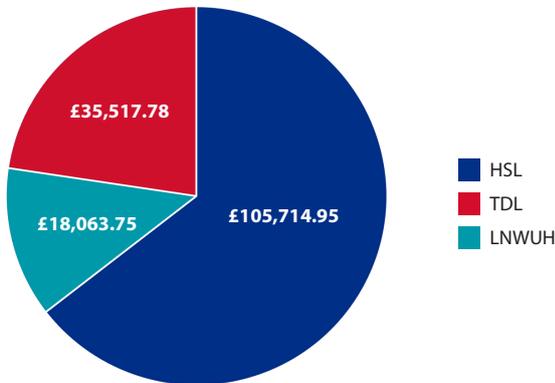
Group Medical Director &
Chair of Education and Training Faculty



Dr Rachael Liebmann

Training Investment

Total Spend Across Sonic Healthcare UK



We have a dedicated training budget, available to support staff in their current and future roles. Sonic Healthcare UK group consists of multiple separate groups:

- **HSL** (Health Services Laboratories) a partnership with UCLH and the Royal Free providing pathology services to UCLH, the Royal Free, North Middlesex, Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Hospitals
- **LNWUH** (London North West University Hospitals) provides pathology services to Northwick Park, Ealing and Central Middlesex Hospitals
- **TDL** (The Doctors Laboratory) provide pathology services for a range of private hospitals including BUPA, BMI, Ramsey and HJE hospitals in addition to many private clinics

Spend per Capital (FTE)



Sonic Healthcare UK committed approximately £160,000 spend on staff development and training. Unfortunately the pandemic has impacted on the number of external training and conference opportunities for our staff. To put the above spend into context, the spend is an average of £90 per FTE.

The spend can be broadly broken down into:

- Categories ranging from investment in our new Learning Management System (LMS)
- Attendance at user group meetings
- Completion of university courses such as MSc
- Room hire
- Pre and post HCPC registration relevant courses
- The use of external companies to deliver training
- Attendance at a range of national and international conferences

Total Spend by Category

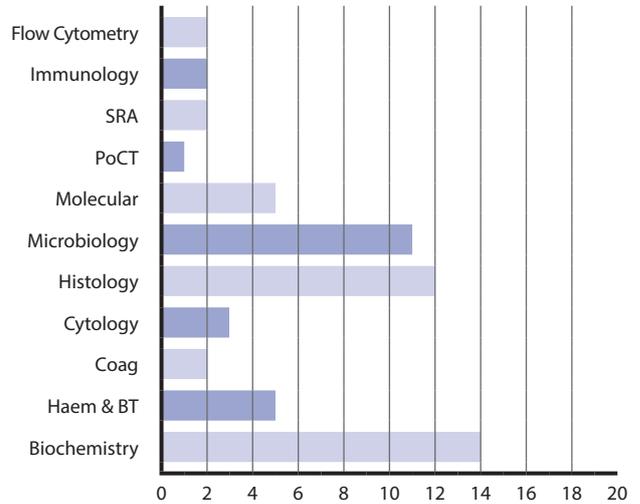


Professional Portfolios

BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST TRAINING PORTFOLIOS

During this period (2019-20) we have supported 59 IBMS registration portfolios leading to HCPC registration as a Biomedical Scientist and 54 IBMS specialist portfolios leading to specialist biomedical scientist roles.

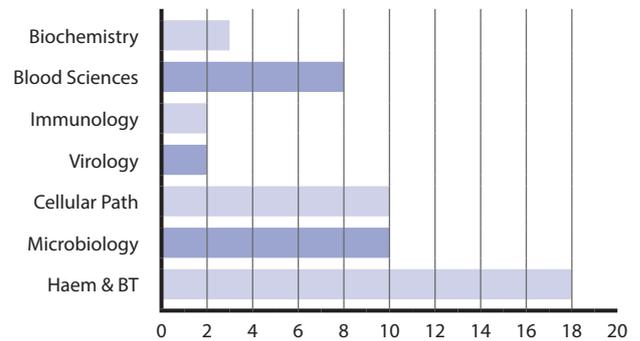
IBMS Registration Portfolios Supported



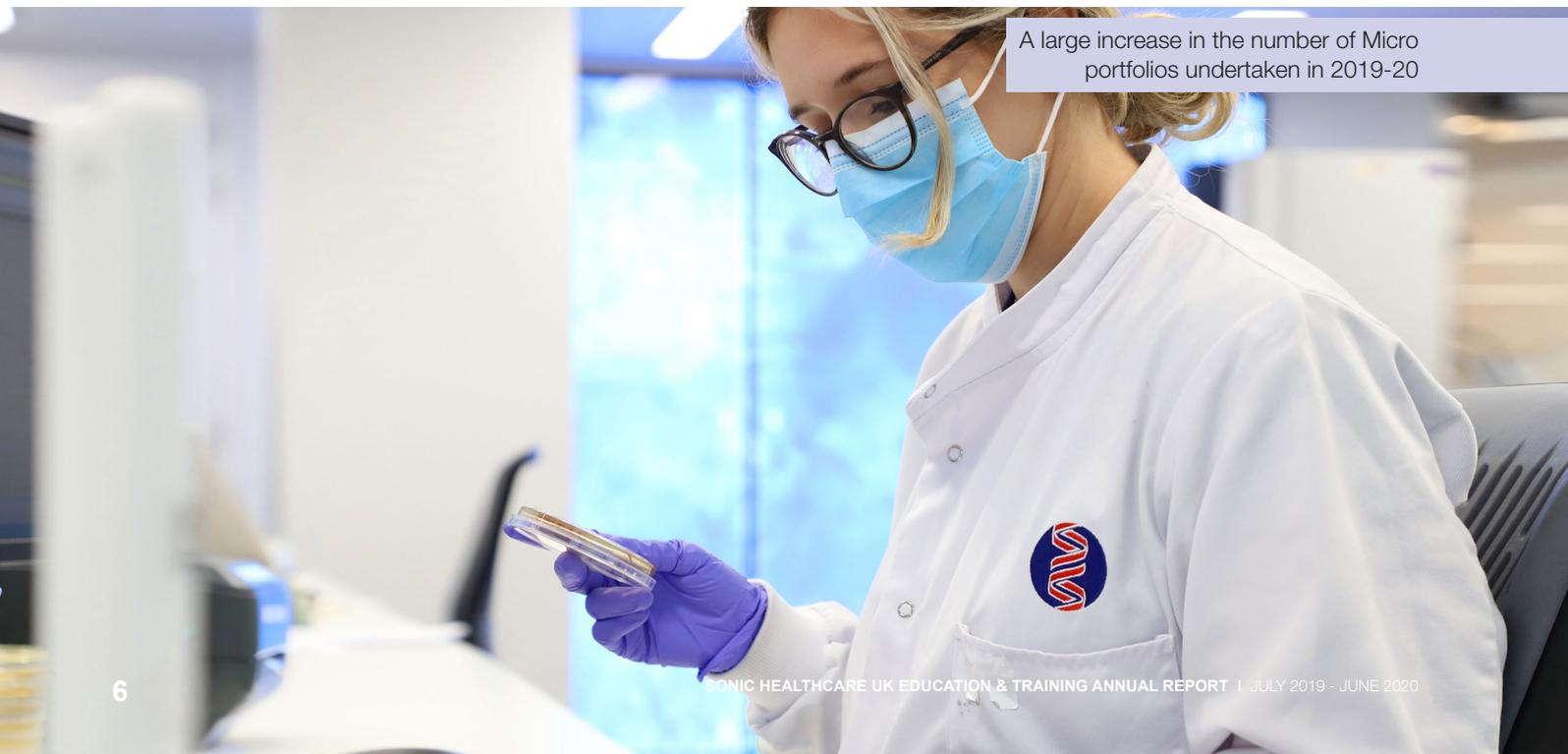
CLINICAL SCIENTIST TRAINING

Over the course of this 12 month period, we have supported 8 clinical scientist training portfolios for HCPC registration as a Clinical Scientist via the Association of Clinical Scientists (ACS) route which involves trainee clinical scientists compiling a portfolio of evidence of work based learning over a 4 year period.

IBMS Specialist Portfolios Supported



A large increase in the number of Micro portfolios undertaken in 2019-20



Medical Training

TRAINEE NUMBERS

Last year approximately 40 medical trainees and students received training in an HSL facility. This is essential for providing the core laboratory training required in the specialty curricula set out by the General Medical Council. Pathology junior doctors are encouraged to undertake research projects and audits which are often laboratory based and require HSL resources and supervision by our staff.

CASE STUDY - HANNAH BROWN & SARRAH TAYABALI

Hannah (Junior Clinical Fellow) and Sarrah (Higher Specialty Trainee) undertook a project entitled 'Clinical Outcomes from Lupus Anticoagulant Testing'. They investigated whether lupus anticoagulant testing was carried out according to internationally agreed criteria and how laboratory results affected clinical management. Biomedical scientists in the coagulation laboratory trained them in laboratory diagnostic techniques, provided data on tests done over a two-year period and supervised the analysis of results.

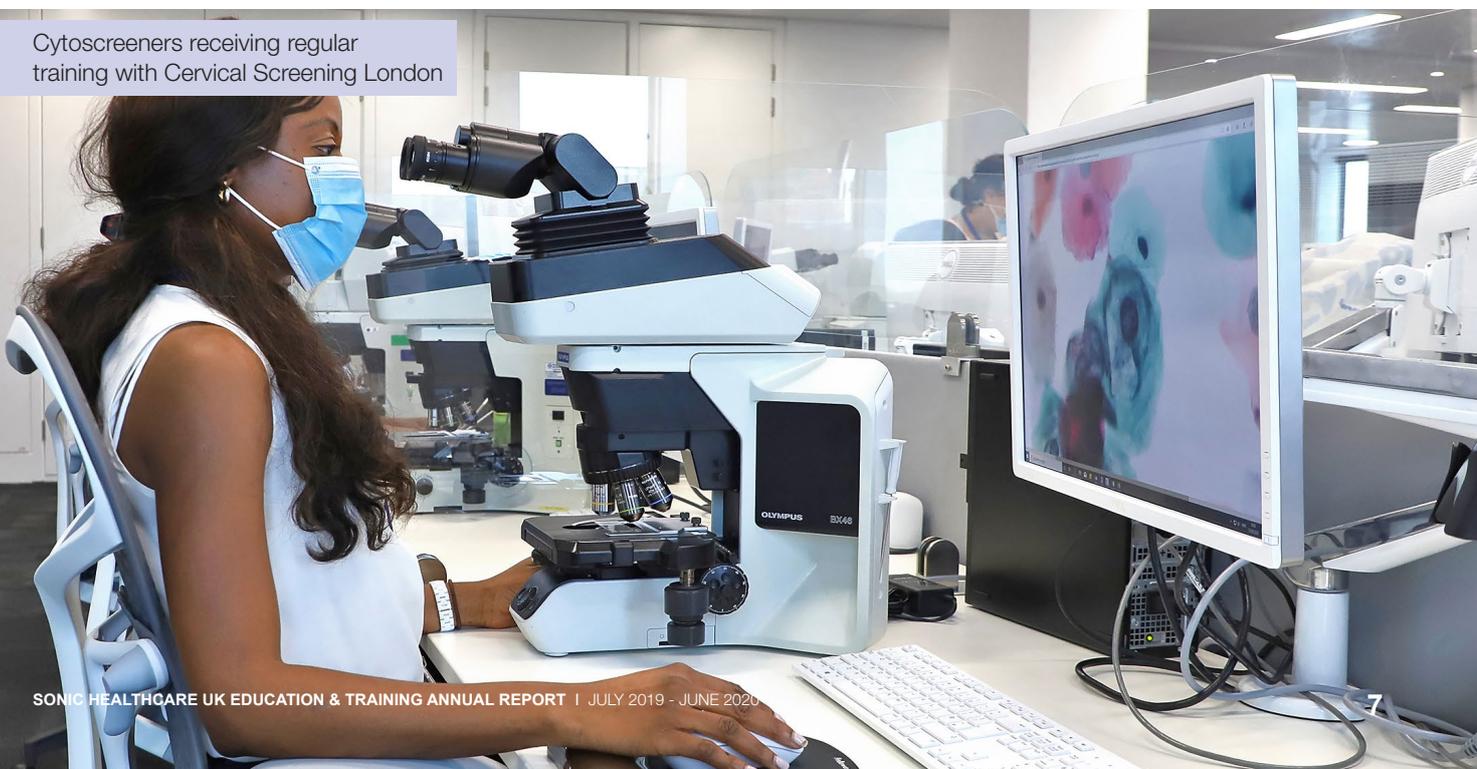
The key findings were that only half of cases had the necessary confirmatory tests and that reliance on a single assay can lead to false negatives. The project had been accepted for presentation at the British Society of Haematology annual scientific meeting that unfortunately had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. This work is now being prepared for publication.

CERVICAL SCREENING LONDON

HSL provides the pan-London NHS Cervical Screening Programme. Centralisation of this key service has provided an excellent platform for training the next generation of cytologists.

Despite the pandemic causing a delay in the arrival of trainees in the laboratory, scientists and consultants worked together to provide a safe environment for delivery of a new and exciting training programme. This provides a placement at CSL for all cytology specialty trainees in their first two years. In addition to formal bench teaching, trainees will be able to attend multi-disciplinary team meetings to experience reporting and have access to a newly created digital cytology atlas.

Cytoscreeners receiving regular training with Cervical Screening London



Training During Covid-19

VIRTUAL IBMS PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENTS

IBMS portfolio assessments typically would take place with the assessor in attendance at the laboratory; however Covid-19 meant that the IBMS changed the assessment format to a virtual assessment.

Shakeela Brown is a Biomedical Scientist who completed her specialist portfolio in Medical Microbiology in early 2020 and was one of the first to be assessed virtually in the company. Shakeela, in partnership with the department's Training and Development Manager, Ashleigh Dadson-Butt coordinated with the examiner, Aisha Bari, Senior Biomedical Scientist and Training Officer at Charing Cross Hospital, to ensure the examination went smoothly.

Virtual assessments put a greater focus on pre-preparation and communication between all parties. It was agreed to cover the laboratory tour part of the assessment by creating a slide show of photographs of different sections of the laboratory. Shakeela commented that "This allowed me to show the examiner the different sections within the Department, including the analysers and equipment that is used. I also took images of myself performing some of the tests, such as reading CSF cell counts to add a personal feel to the virtual tour."

Notwithstanding some technical challenges, she completed the specialist examination, with Aisha able to ask questions and we're pleased that Shakeela came through the examination with flying colours.

VIRTUAL TRAINING

Like many organisations the Covid-19 pandemic meant we had to respond to changing workplace requirements and a very different 'normal'. Most of our office based departments e.g. finance were

moved to a home working environment, this created additional space to ensure the safety of our laboratory staff who had to remain working on our on-site laboratories.

Traditional training formats of gathering in a meeting room were no longer possible so we undertook a review of our regular face to face training sessions. Some training sessions were developed into an asynchronous online courses on Sonic Learn and others were moved onto virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom.



CASE STUDIES

Risk Assessment Using Sevron

Risk assessments are completed in a system known as 'Sevron'. This system was implemented in late 2019 and training sessions were rolled out across the organisation to support staff in learning how to use it. Due to Covid-19, training could no longer be offered in a group face to face format and we chose to create an asynchronous course on Sonic Learn. Choosing an asynchronous format meant that staff could access the training at any time that was convenient for them and putting it on Sonic Learn ensured accessibility to all staff.

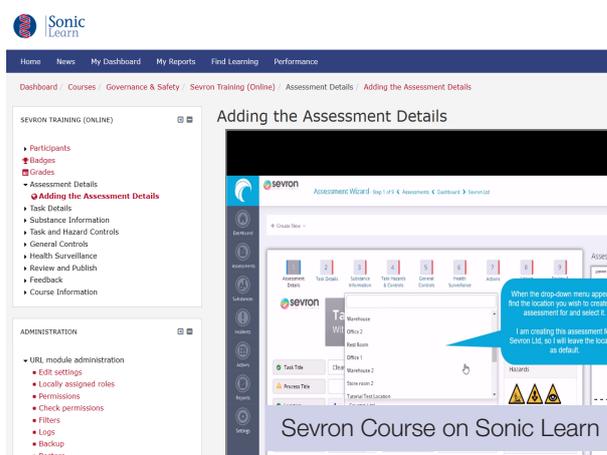
Short bite-sized training videos created by the software provider were displayed in functional units to allow staff to access the right video depending on the particular tasks that they wished to cover. Feedback was requested and over 90% of learners felt their understanding of the software improved as a result of the online course. Some useful feedback has helped to shape the development of future courses and it is encouraging that staff have requested more courses in this format.

Safety Cabinets

The Covid-19 pandemic has raised some new training needs across the organisation. There was a wide scale installation of safety cabinets into laboratories and a large number of staff needing training in a very short timeline as this was a piece of equipment a lot of people were not familiar with in their day to day role. Again, running face to face training sessions was not the best solution to this challenge and we developed an online course on Sonic Learn which would be accessible by staff at any time via any mobile device.

Training videos were filmed using HSL staff, demonstrating the various key points in the use and maintenance of safety cabinets. Next was the creation of online content, including quick reference documents and an assessment, to ensure staff understood the information provided. Once staff had completed (and passed) all elements of the course it then appeared in their record of learning as evidence of completion. Reports were created to enable managers to monitor completion and ensure their staff were suitably training in the use of safety cabinets.

Again it is encouraging to see the level of positive feedback on this course - it currently holds a five star rating, which is determined by staff who have completed the course.



"I found it easy to follow, the course being broken down into small bite sized chunks was brilliant as I could do one section, digest the information and make notes and then move on to the next one."



Safety cabinets now common place across the organisation

Corporate Training

BITE-SIZE LEARNING

We continue to provide our excellent programme of Soft Skills courses which are available for staff to book onto via Sonic Learn and we encourage all staff new to supervisor roles to complete a suite of courses covering various HR processes.

Workshops include:

- Absence Management
- Recruitment
- Interview
- Maternity, Paternity & Shared Parental Leave
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Telephone Training
- Annual Joint Reviews



IMPACT OF COVID-19 & FUTURE PLANS FOR CORPORATE TRAINING

Sonic Training

Sadly, because of the pandemic we were unable to welcome back Dr Stephen Fairy, Sonic's Chief Medical Officer and Virginia Re, Head of Culture, Learning and Development from Sydney. They were due to deliver the popular Sonic Training programme in June 2020, but because of the current situation could not take place this year.

We sincerely hope we will be able to invite Stephen and Virginia back in 2021 so more people can experience this excellent training which is always so well received by staff.

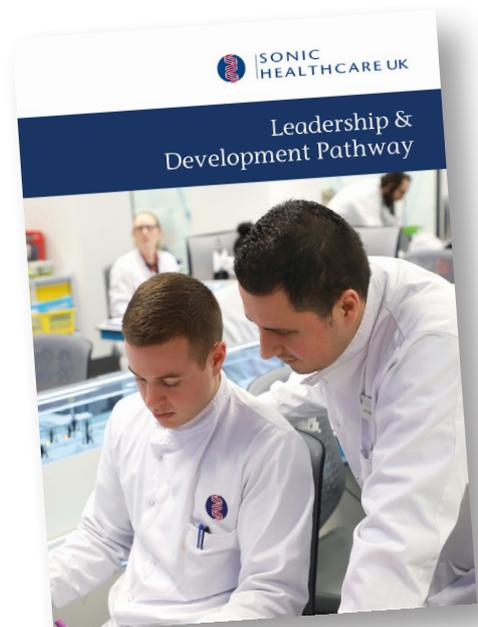
Preparing to Lead Programme

After the success of the first Preparing to Lead course which is a talent management programme for next generation leaders, we had planned to deliver it again in 2020. This too was postponed because of the pandemic; however, we hope to deliver this again in the not too distant future.

Values in Practice Programme

New for 2020 we had also planned to launch the Values in Practice course for senior operational managers in the organisation. We hope to be able to deliver this course sometime in the future. The programme will focus on the following:

- Adaptive leadership in a changing environment
- Managing self, teams and relationships
- Developing our people



Apprenticeships

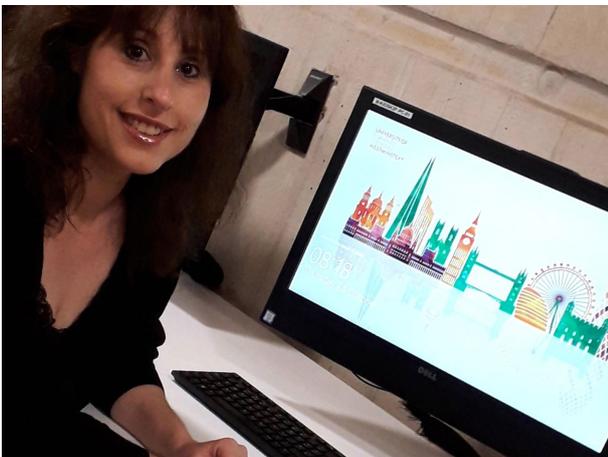
We continue to grow our apprenticeship offerings across the organisation and we have partnered with additional education providers to expand the qualifications we are able to support. We are currently supporting apprenticeships in the following:

- Level 3 Business Administration
- Level 3 IT, Software and Telecoms Professionals
- Level 3 Infrastructure Technician
- Warehouse Operative
- Team Leader

We are also very excited to have our first cohort of staff undertaking a BSc (Hons) degree apprenticeship in Applied Biomedical Science with the University of Westminster which started in September 2019. This programme of learning gives staff the opportunity of gaining an IBMS accredited degree while working fulltime in one of our laboratories and also includes completion of the IBMS registration portfolio so staff graduate with HCPC registration as a Biomedical Scientist. This part-time day release course gives staff the unique opportunity “to earn while they learn”.

All apprenticeships are funded through the apprenticeship levy without any cost to the individual.

CASE STUDY - BRONWEN SEVEL



Bronwen works at our Northwick Park site as an Associate Practitioner in Histopathology. She has been with the organisation for 5 years and is currently undertaking a degree apprenticeship in Applied Biomedical Science at the University of Westminster. She is part of the first cohort of Sonic Healthcare UK laboratory staff to undertake this programme of learning.

What has been your career so far with The Doctors Laboratory?

“My job in Histopathology is my first job with TDL and I will have been with the business 5 years in October 2020. Before then I worked as an MLA in Cytology at North Middlesex University Hospital.”

What made you want to do an apprenticeship with TDL?

“I did Psychology for my first degree, but was unable to pursue this so I decided to go with my Plan B option which was to work in a laboratory.

I have wanted to advance my laboratory career for a while and when the opportunity arose to do the apprenticeship I jumped at the chance. Since working in Histopathology, I have wanted to progress to become a Biomedical Scientist.”

What is your typical day?

“We have a rota system in the department which gives all staff the opportunity to rotate around each area weekly. This allows us to gain experience in all areas of Histopathology.”

How have you found working and studying?

“I knew it would be challenging, but I was mentally prepared from day one. I knew that I would have to sacrifice my social life and work hard, but I really wanted to do this. One unexpected positive aspect is that my daughter and I study together at weekends. She loves that we do our ‘homework’ together.”

What are you hoping to do in the future?

“My goal is to become a registered Biomedical Scientist and I am lucky enough to be pursuing this.”

Staff Achievements

PITHIA Trial

Daniel Simmons, Senior BMS and Deputy Quality Manager at the Royal Free Hospital, describes the pioneering new digital pathology service supporting kidney transplants.

Daniel was recently the lead author of the team that won the cellular pathology poster competition at the IBMS Congress. The winning poster's subject described trialling of the first national digital pathology service "PITHIA" to support kidney transplants.

Can you tell us some more about what the PITHIA trial is?

"There are around 5,000 people waiting for a kidney transplant in the UK. While the number of donors has risen, so has the proportion of kidneys from older people. Only 28 percent of kidneys from donors aged 60+ are currently utilised because of the specialist knowledge that's required to assess kidney function.

PITHIA, or to give it its full name, Pre-Implantation Trial of Histopathology in Renal Allografts, is a national biopsy service. It gives access to specialist knowledge for diagnosis 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via digital pathology. We estimate that when the service is fully operational it will allow for an extra 130 transplants per year."

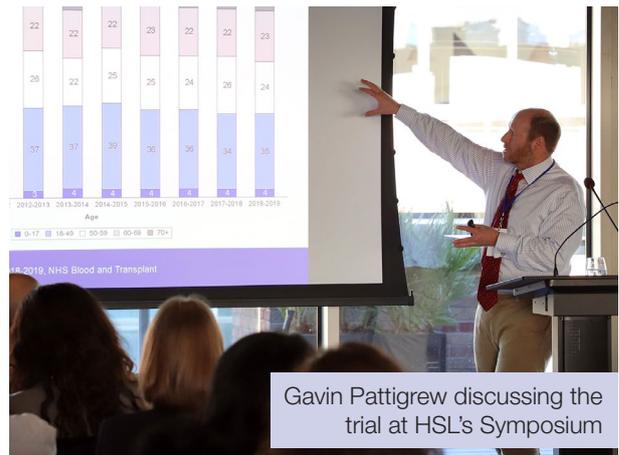
How does it work on a national scale?

"The trial is working thanks to the great collaboration between a lot of people and organisations; there is a network of six participating laboratories in England and Scotland. As soon as a specimen kidney is removed and inspected, the National Organ Retrieval Service team will take a biopsy.

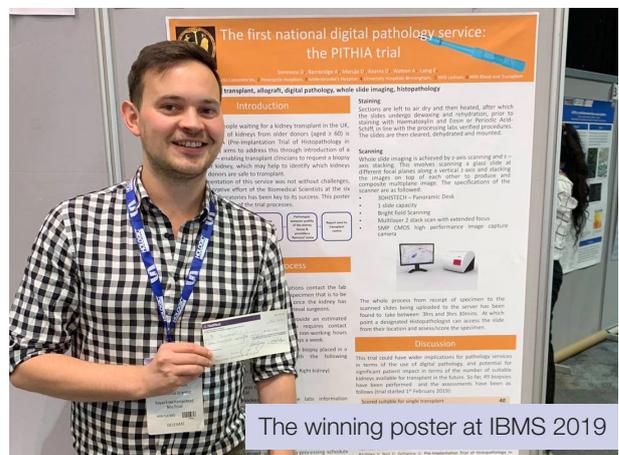
NHS Blood and Transplant Hub Operations contact one of the network's labs directly to advise them of the sample's arrival time. Samples are processed urgently, the sections are cut, stained, mounted and then scanned, the whole process taking up to just three-and-a-half hours. At this point, one of 12 on-call Renal Histopathologist can access the slide from wherever they are in the country to assess and score the specimen.



Daniel Simmons



Gavin Pattigrew discussing the trial at HSL's Symposium



The winning poster at IBMS 2019

How did you become involved in PITHIA trial?

“The role of a BMS in cellular pathology is very varied. We receive and process tissue from all sites of the human body and contribute to the diagnosis of many different diseases.

Assessment for organ donation is one of the more rapid assessments we offer and can occur at any time of day.

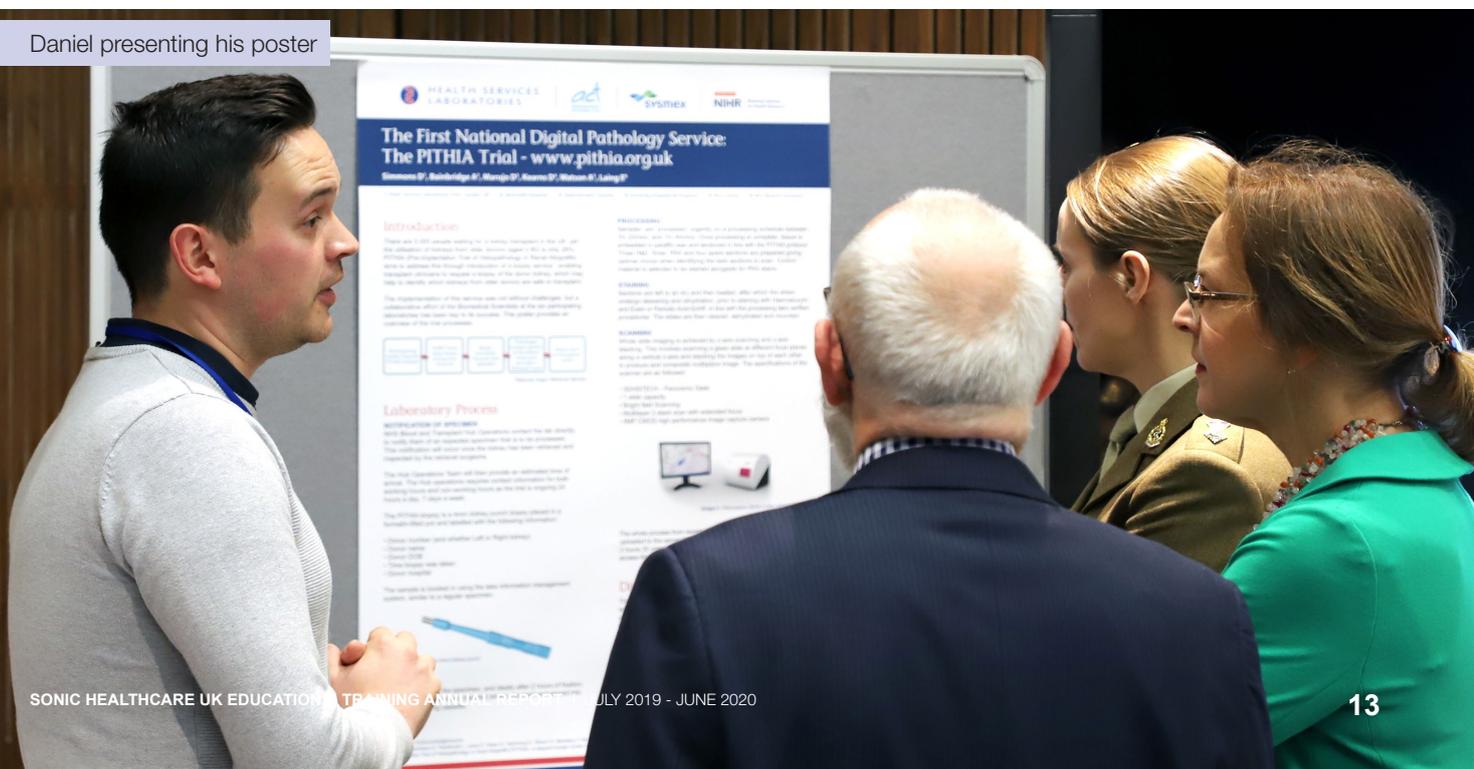
Our lab offers a 24 hour, on-call service, meaning there's a BMS on call from Friday 5:30pm to the following Friday 9am. So, we already had the infrastructure in place that complemented the PITHIA trial. We just had to incorporate the digital pathology aspect.

In a diagnostic lab we don't often get the chance to take part in such a wide reaching and impactful research trial. My other colleagues on the on-call rota, Max Owusu-Ansah and Reshmi Patel, were all happy to expand our service to incorporate the trial. We simply could not have anticipated the immediate positive effect for patients on the renal transplant waiting list.”

What lessons has the PITHIA trial given you about wider use of digital pathology?

“We're very proud that the trial has proved successful and we understand that the model is now being considered for liver transplantation.”

Daniel presenting his poster



HSL Research & Innovation Symposium

The fifth Health Services Laboratories Annual Research & Innovations Symposium was held in conjunction with the Royal College of Pathologists International Pathology Day which took place on the 13th November 2019. The Symposium was held at the College's prestigious award-winning new building in Alie Street, London.

The programme included some amazing talks covering Advances in Rapid & Point-of-Care Diagnostic Testing beginning with a welcome from the President of the Royal College of Pathologists, Professor Jo Martin. Professor Peter Wilson, Consultant Microbiologist at UCLH and the London Specialty Training Committee Chair for Microbiology gave a hugely informative and entertaining talk on Environmental Pathology: Treatment and Prevention of Transmission of Hospital Acquired Infection.

Providing evidence of the importance of pathology to research for other branches of medicine, the next three talks were from non-pathologists. Dr David Brealey, Consultant Anaesthetist and Clinical Lead for Critical Care Service and Trials at UCLH spoke to the symposium about the Changing Face of Critical Care: The Role of Rapid Diagnostics clearly showing how pivotal pathology tests are to critical care practice and research.

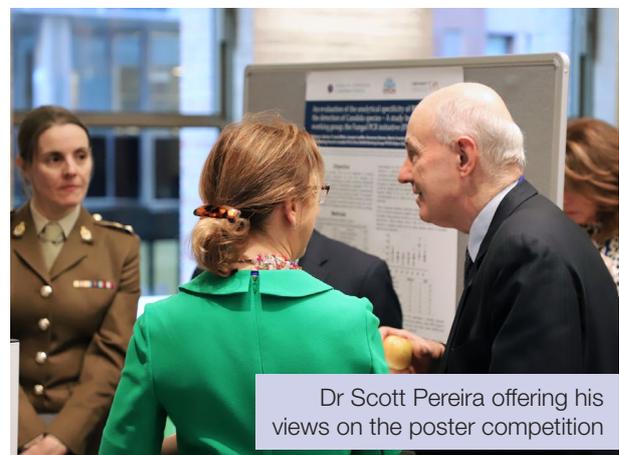
Reminding us all that not all patients are in hospital and that GPs are crucial to the commissioning of pathology services, Dr Clare Stephens was the next speaker. Clare who is a GP Partner is also a Board Member of Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group and Clinical Senior Responsible Officer for Cancer Commissioning for North Central London Sustainability and Transformation Partnership. The crucial role of a partnership between the Clinical Commissioning Groups and pathology service in innovation on healthcare was clearly shown by Clare's talk on the Introduction and Uptake of qFIT Testing in the Community.



Prof. Jo Martin opening proceedings



Prof. Peter Wilson and Dr David Brealey



Dr Scott Pereira offering his views on the poster competition

One of the key changes taking place in the provision of cellular pathology is the introduction of digital pathology and Mr Gavin Pettigrew, Consultant Surgeon and Reader in Clinical and Experimental Transplantation at Cambridge University presented the experience of a National Digital Pathology Service for Kidney Transplantation. Bringing the formal sessions of the Symposium to a close was Dr Martin Young, Consultant Histopathologist and Clinical Director for Pathology at the Royal Free and Director of Health Education England London, Kent Surrey and Sussex School of Pathology who updated attendees on the place of Research in the Pathology Training Curriculum highlighting the importance of research to the training of future pathology Consultants.



Dr Martin Young

All of the Symposium attendees were welcomed to join the International Pathology Day round-table discussion, Pathology: A Question of Quality, which was live-streamed to pathology staff around the world. Sonic Healthcare UK sponsored the International Pathology Day poster competition affording the potential for many attendees to prepare and present a poster demonstrating their own research activity. The author of the winning poster, Sonic's own Clinical Scientist Dr Rebecca Gorton, was presented with a brand new engraved iPad by Dr Rachael Liebmann, TDL Group Medical Director and Royal College of Pathologists Vice President.



Competition winner Rebecca Gorton

Dr Clare Stephens discusses qFIT testing in the Community



External Events

IBMS CONGRESS - SEPTEMBER 2019

The Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) Congress is the biggest event for the biomedical science profession in the UK. The 2019 programme included lectures, presentations and workshops across multiple disciplines, showcasing the increasing breadth of biomedical science and its impact on healthcare.

HSL exhibited at the event, raising awareness of its network of state-of-the-art laboratories and training and development opportunities. The stand featured a mini version of the Halo's GLP track - a unique and highly complex sample tracking system with vertical connectivity across multiple floors - accompanied by a live stream of the real GLP track in action. This proved very popular among delegates and highlighted HSL's commitment to investing and developing the latest technologies.

David Ricketts, Head of Laboratory Process Improvement and Wendy Leversuch, Head of Scientific Training both presented at the conference. David spoke about developing a career pathway for support workers in sample reception, while Wendy discussed how to balance training needs and priorities with limited resources. Starting with a general approach, Wendy explained how to identify and prioritise training needs before using specific examples to illustrate how HSL has put this into practice.

“Overall the conference was a huge success. Our stand was very busy and we spoke to a real mix of delegates working across the profession. It was encouraging to see such a positive response to our labs and the opportunities we provide - particularly for those wishing to complete their registration and specialist portfolios. It was a fantastic few days and we look forward to returning in 2021.”

Wendy Leversuch, Head of Scientific Training



HSL staff meeting delegates



David Ricketts speaking during Congress



There was even a 'mini' GLP Track on show

AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

In December 2019, the world's largest display dedicated to the story of medicine opens at the Science Museum. Medicines: The Wellcome Galleries is designed to bring every aspect of medicine to life. With more than three thousand medical artefacts displayed, it will also feature artworks and interactive and immersive experiences. We're delighted that we contributed to the exhibition and are flying the flag for pathology and diagnostics.

The Medicines and Bodies area highlights how the quest to understand our bodies has transformed medicine. Sonic Healthcare UK and the Science Museum have produced a video which will be shown within a section exploring how the study of the chemical makeup of blood and urine determines diagnoses. The video follows the journey of a sample, from blood-taking to analysis to results, and was filmed in our flagship hub laboratory site, the Halo Building and our phlebotomy site at Wimpole Street.

You can view the film on our HSL YouTube Channel:
[CLICK HERE](#)



The faculty board get a sneak peak of the final video



Other exhibits at the Science Museum



HSL's stand (with cupcakes) at IBMS 2019

Sonic Learn

In February 2020 we went live with our new Learning Management System 'Sonic Learn'. This provides a central website for staff to access online training courses and book onto local workshops.

This new website came with additional functionality to support our staff including a dashboard highlighting the status of an individual's mandatory training and email notifications of upcoming courses.

A highly popular news section was also created within Sonic Learn, alerting users to newly created courses as well as reporting on training events taking place across the year.

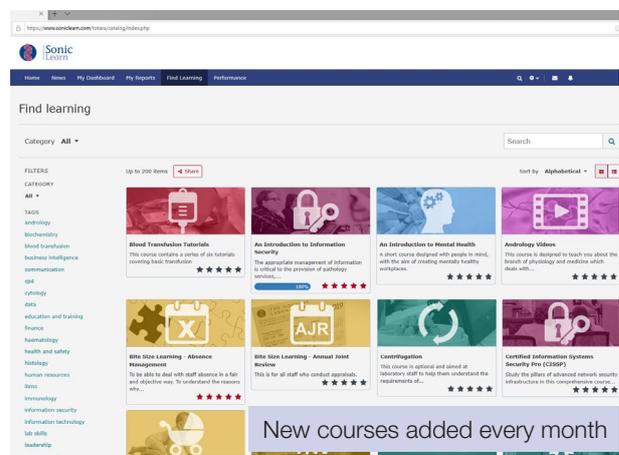
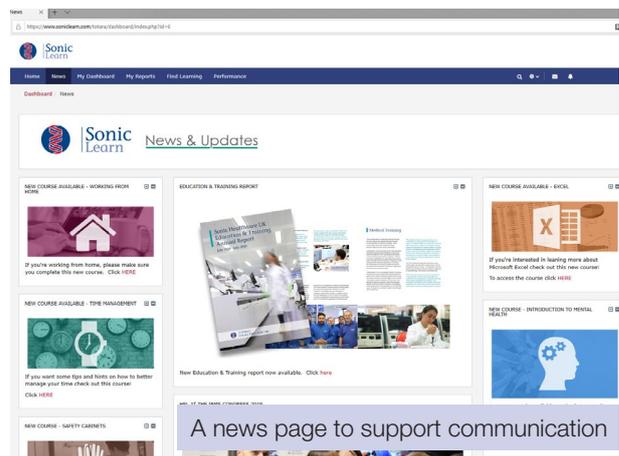
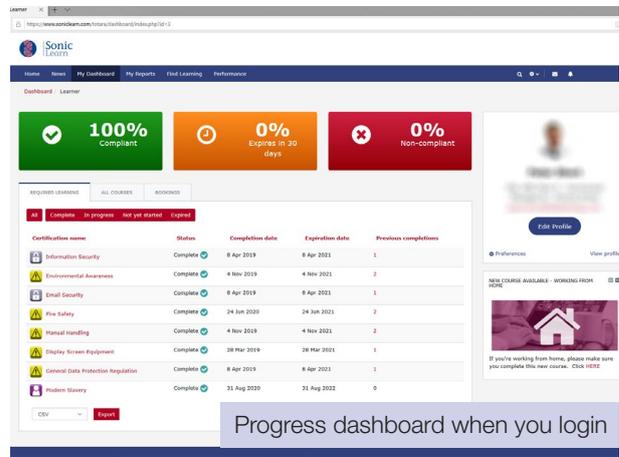
A range of new courses which we are continually adding to as a way of supporting individual professional development.

- QMS Advanced Document Module Training
- Safety cabinets
- Productivity and Time Management
- Microsoft Excel 2019 Beginners
- Certified Information Systems Security Pro (CISSP)
- Sevron Training (Online)
- Driver Dangerous Goods Awareness

We still have lots more plans for Sonic Learn. In addition to the new content and courses that will be added to the site, we are developing an online application form that allows staff to apply for funding and time off for external training courses (currently this is separate to Sonic Learn).

We are looking at integrating Sonic Learn with the new HR system (Sonic Hub) to help ensure a smooth process for staff onboarding.

Suggestions of new courses or comments on current courses are both welcomed and encouraged - especially course ideas that would benefit a whole department or even the entire workforce! Contact us at: training@hslpathology.com



Future Planning

At the time of writing, the Covid19 pandemic is on-going and continues to set challenges across the profession.

We are incredibly proud of our staff who have played crucial roles in the response to the pandemic, including some who have been recognised in the Queen's birthday honours.

We are in the process of building a Covid-19 laboratory to support community testing across the London region and that provides a unique challenge of needing to train up a large group of staff in advance of the laboratory being available.

Despite Covid-19 we continue to move forward with many project in Education & Training:

Wellbeing - Soon will be the launch of a new staff wellbeing policy. In addition to a wide range of staff benefits and discounts, will be a number of courses promoting staff wellbeing which can be found on Sonic Learn.

Brexit - As the UK moves closer towards its exit from the European Union, we are providing support to both our managers and individual staff members who may be affected. A range of courses and workshops are already available.

Basic Laboratory Skills - A series of online courses focussing on support basic lab skills are currently being developed. Examples include:

- Centrifuges
- Pipetting Skills
- Sterilisation & Disinfection
- Waste Handling

Finally, Sonic UK are about to embark on a company-wide roll out of Microsoft office 365 which will be a useful tool in supporting education and training across the organisation. We continue to review existing training formats to ensure we continue to support staff develop in a safe and effective manner and I look forward to sharing more in our next education report.

Wendy Leversuch

Head of Scientific Training

Preparing for the new Surge Lab





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