

# Education & Training Report

2023/24



SONIC HEALTHCARE  
UK

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# Introduction

Welcome to the 2023-24 Education and Training Report. This annual report highlights our unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development within our organisation.

At Sonic Healthcare UK, we believe that investing in our employees' education and training is fundamental to our success and the quality of service we provide to our patients, clients and stakeholders.

This report provides an overview of the various educational and training activities undertaken throughout the year. It showcases the achievements of our staff, the growth of our training programs, and our strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing the learning experience for all employees. We are particularly excited about the launch of new e-learning modules and the continued success of our apprenticeship programs, which have been instrumental in developing the next generation of leaders and experts throughout the company.

As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to creating a supportive and dynamic learning environment. Our future plans include further expanding our training offerings, leveraging new technologies to enhance learning, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. We are confident that our ongoing investment in education and training will not only benefit our employees but also contribute to the overall success and sustainability of Sonic Healthcare UK.

The Educational and Training Faculty membership is:

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

We invite you to explore this report and learn more about the impactful education and training initiatives that are shaping the future of our organisation.



# Professional Portfolios




Professional training qualifications are vital to developing a highly skilled workforce. We encourage our staff to undertake widely recognised professional qualifications such as the IBMS Portfolios which fit into a range of roles and career opportunities within the group. Over the course of our last year, we have supported the following:

## Laboratory Support Staff Portfolios

✓ IBMS Certificate of Achievement | **10**

## Clinical Scientist Training

We have staff working through clinical Scientist training positions in both the ACS Portfolios and the STP.

-  ACS Portfolio in Genetics | **5**
-  STP in Biochemistry | **1**
-  STP in Infection Sciences | **3**

## Biomedical Scientist Training Portfolios

### Pre-Registration

Number of IBMS Registration Portfolios supported | **94**

### Post-Registration

BBS Specialist Certificate supported | **5**

IBMS Specialist Diplomas supported (*breakdown below*) | **63**

-  Biochemistry | **10**
-  Haematology & Hospital Transfusion Practice | **13**
-  Blood Sciences | **8**
-  Immunology | **3**
-  Virology | **3**
-  Cellular Pathology / Cytology | **9**
-  Microbiology | **17**

# Training Investment

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 University, Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Hospitals.

**Labex** which provides pathology services to London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust covering Northwick Park, Ealing and Central Middlesex Hospitals.

**TDL (The Doctors Laboratory)** provide pathology services for a range of private hospitals including BUPA, Circle (formerly BMI), Ramsey and HJE hospitals in addition to many private clinics.

Over the course of our financial year 2023-24 we committed approximately £531,660 in supporting staff training and development. This represents an increase of almost £66,000 to support ongoing staff development and career progression compared to the prior year.

Investment can broadly be broken down into categories ranging across:

- Development of our Learning Management System (Sonic Learn)
- Academic courses, typically MSc to develop new Senior Biomedical Scientists
- Apprenticeships
- Attendance at offsite events such as conferences and user groups meetings
- Development of bespoke in-house training events with third parties
- Professional qualifications such as IBMS portfolios and Certificates of Expert Practice

Category Breakdown	
LMS	£15,889.00
University Course	£67,640.83
Professional Qualification	£27,217.16
Room Hire	£13,604.64
Conference / Meetings	£26,457.96
Post registration	£11,385.11
Pre-registration	£7,316.00
User Group	£3,326.89
L&D Departmental Costs	£178,750.00
Apprenticeships	£180,075.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>£531,663.10</b>

# Medical Training

Medical training in Clinical Biochemistry aims to achieve a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) in Chemical Pathology and Metabolic Medicine. Training of clinical scientists follows a similar pathway, at the end of which, in each of these programmes candidates are expected to obtain the Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists (FRCPath).

The Sonic Healthcare UK (SHUK) Education Faculty currently oversee good educational and governance infrastructures, that can sustain quality improvement going forward.

The clinical and scientific teams work as a multi-professional team sharing a clear vision for education that underpins SHUK's support of postgraduate medical education. We work closely with NHS England to provide all aspects of laboratory training specified in the curriculum including laboratory management,

audit, information systems and safety. There are ample opportunities for networking and communication across our laboratory network ensuring comprehensive access to Essential Services Laboratories at each of our NHS partner sites, as well as our central laboratory at the Halo Building for routine and specialist biochemistry services.

Every opportunity is used to deliver training in patient safety and the management of risk, including incident reporting, governance, and the development of leadership and team-working skills through our Quality team. By involving the trainees in these processes and inviting them to clinical governance meetings, quality assurance meetings and laboratory management meetings.

This encourages trainees to report incidents of poor patient care, be involved in learning and sharing

safety lessons, helping to develop and implement solutions to prevent such incidents from recurring.

## Future Plans

We will drive up quality across all training programmes for the multi professional group through a consistent and on-going process of review and innovation.

We will establish further professional programmes, designed to enhance the opportunities for all trainees to develop as clinical leaders, educators, and researchers of the future. Resulting in the expansion of inter-professional training opportunities across the entire multi-professional group.

*Ross Hall Laboratory in Glasgow*





## GIRFT: Celebrating Excellence in Continuous Improvement

Sonic Healthcare UK has embraced the NHS England 'Getting it Right First time' (GIRFT) programme which is designed to improve the treatment and care of patients through in-depth review of services, benchmarking, and presenting a data-driven evidence base to support change.

Our staff are encouraged to always be considering ways we can improve and we run a regular awards scheme to recognise initiatives implemented within the organisation. This year the following staff achieved GIRFT awards which included a cash prize and presentation from our executive team.

*Director of Performance Projects  
Daniel Frayne explaining the good  
work of the GIRFT programme*



### **Sabina McCann | Deputy Head of Haemostasis - 60 Whitfield Street**

With the dynamic nature of our business, collaboration across departments is often the key to achieving breakthrough solutions. A shining example of this collaborative spirit can be found in the efforts of Sabina, who transformed the way we manage specialist coagulation workflow through our 60 Whitfield Street laboratory, with the implementation of a test booking system. Instead of confining herself to her department's boundaries, Sabina liaised with colleagues from phlebotomy and couriers to collectively address the issue.

This collaborative approach not only showcased her proactiveness, but also led to a comprehensive understanding of the problem from various perspectives.



### **Josep Linares | Lead BMS (IHC)/Deputy Head of Department - 60 Whitfield Street**

Josep, whose unwavering commitment to continuous improvement has transformed our in-house reagent manufacturing process in HSL-AD. In his stability study, Josep spearheaded the implementation of accurate expiry dates that have significantly reduced wastage of high-cost reagents.

Josep's dedication to precision has not only elevated the quality of our products but has also reduced wastage and repeat testing. By addressing the intricacies of in-house reagent production, Josep has positioned our organisation as a leader in getting it right the first time, minimising errors and optimising resource utilisation.



**Sally Stamper | Sample Reception Processing Officer - Manchester**

Sally was recognised for improving processes through Sample Reception, and ultimately improving the service our company provides to the client.

During a site visit by one of the company's biggest clients, Sally was asked to demonstrate the processing element of their requests. Sally did this with confidence and explained the process in detail, she also respectfully highlighted several issues with their request forms which could and had led to errors being made within the laboratory. The client took this on board, and within two weeks they had changed their request forms, drastically reducing incidents.



**Rajesh Nalluri | Head of Department - Northwick Park Hospital**

Rajesh is the Head of Department for Northwick Park and Ealing Cellular Pathology. He was tasked with introducing a new pathway to facilitate the onboarding of increased sample numbers due the expansion of our private Histology service.

Rajesh was not only able to maintain the excellent level of service which had come to be expected, but also implemented this new pathway with great success, with zero user complaints and forming excellent relationships with users and pathologists. This was only possible due to Rajesh's diligence and attitude towards GIRFT.

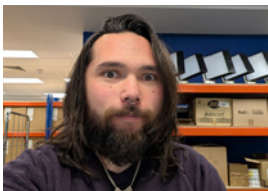
**Other Staff Achievements**



**Bronwen Sevel**  
Degree Apprentice  
Autumn 23



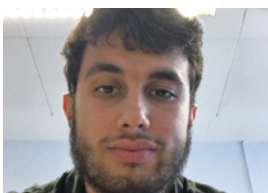
**Rebecca Garvey**  
Team Leadership  
Spring 24



**Tuan Desomer-Chu**  
Team Leadership  
Summer 23



**Thu Le**  
Business Admin  
Winter 23



**Daniel Constantinou**  
Information & Communication  
Summer 23



**Alexandra Hutcheson**  
Team Leadership  
Spring 24

# IBMS Congress 2023

**We were pleased to return to exhibit at IBMS Congress 2023. Located amongst some of the largest names in diagnostic sciences, Sonic Healthcare UK were proud to present their most interactive stand to date.**

Using interactive display screens, delegates were able to see Sonic UK's nationwide network of facilities, how they operate and interlace with one another, and even see breakdowns of test numbers and how sites support patient healthcare within that locality.

Delegates were impressed with the 'live' video feature, which gave viewers a glimpse into several laboratory sites whilst they grabbed a cup of coffee (which was unofficially voted the best coffee of the show!) A whole host of goodies were given away via the very popular Plinko game and three lucky winners took home a new Chromebook Laptop each day! We continued our sponsorship of the Education and Training program, with an array of enlightening talks presented to packed-out audiences.

Our own staff also contributed to the excellent lecture program. Process Improvement Consultant, Dr David Ricketts, expertly explained the technicalities of the new version of ISO 15189 on day one and spoke to key skills for supervisory roles, as well as ISO 22367 and the management of risks to medical laboratories throughout the week.

Head of Learning and Development, Wendy Leversuch and Deputy Head of Human Resources, Alwyn Nason, also presented, explaining how laboratory staff can work with HR and occupational health services to achieve the best results. They clarified the functions of both departments, highlighting their roles to prevent and mitigate risk - concluding that there are supportive mechanisms and partnerships with all parties working together.

Sonic Healthcare UK was also well represented in the scientific poster showcases that were available to be viewed during the event in Hall 4. Emily Apsley, David Allen and Sabina McCann all came away with plaudits from judges and fellow participants.

Roshni Popat, who had recently joined the organisation as Training Academy Manager, was able to speak to interested delegates about the academy.

**"I remember the previous IBMS Congress and visiting the Sonic Healthcare UK stand. This year, it's a pleasure to be working on their stand and to be engaging with people from across all backgrounds - some may even become future colleagues! Congress really is second to none for networking and sharing experiences with like-minded people."**







## IBMS Congress 2023 In Pictures

Sonic Healthcare UK's attendance at the 2023 edition of Congress was the most ambitious to date. From interactive screens to key-note speakers, teddies to the 'best' coffee stand, we put together a display which engaged a record number of delegates - and a bit of fun was had along the way as well!

Many thanks to all staff who helped to create such a positive four days in Birmingham - here's to an even better 2025 Congress!



# Corporate Training

We aim to support development of a wide range of skills within our workforce. In 2023 we launched two new workshops focused on improving communication skills.

## Presentation Skills Workshop

Contrary to popular belief, presentation skills are not something you either have or don't have, they are something you can learn or develop. This workshop teaches techniques behind an effective presentation and shows how to put them into practice.

The workshop takes place over 2 sessions, with each session providing personalised feedback to attendees who deliver short presentations to a small group, and get guidance on how to improve both presentation and communication skills.

## Interpersonal Skills Workshop

The ability to communicate or interact well with people is crucial. We use interpersonal skills all the time when dealing with others, whether in the workplace, in social situations, or within a family. This workshop looks at verbal, non-verbal, paraverbal communication (not what we say but how we say it) and active listening.

Since its launch over 100 staff have completed it to excellent feedback with 89% agreeing that their knowledge or skills have improved by taking this course. The L&D team have been travelling across our network to deliver in person sessions with more requests from managers to have this workshop delivered within their department.

## New Starter Onboarding

The start of any new job can be overwhelming with a lot of new information in a short space of time.

We have implemented a series of onboarding emails with the aim of ensuring information is successfully shared and a welcoming and engaging culture is fostered.

Topics include:

- Welcome and highlight key tasks such as induction and mandatory training
- Modes of communication used across the organisation
- A summary of staff benefits
- A summary of IT systems staff may use including our HR system, Sonic Learn, Office 365, QPulse etc
- An organisation overview
- A summary of our Core Values



# Appenticeships

We are proud that we as an organisation, continue to support staff development through apprenticeship schemes, which provide a valuable mode of study for staff. Those completing apprenticeships are given 20% 'off the job' training hours which enables them to have the necessary time required to learn new skills and apply them in their day-to-day roles.

During the 2023-24 year we have supported the following apprenticeships:

- BSc (hons) Applied Biomedical Science | **22**  
(see pages 12 - 13 for further details)
- Team Leadership | **4**
- Operational Management | **3**
- Business Administration | **3**
- Project Management | **1**
- HR Support | **1**
- Information Communication | **1**

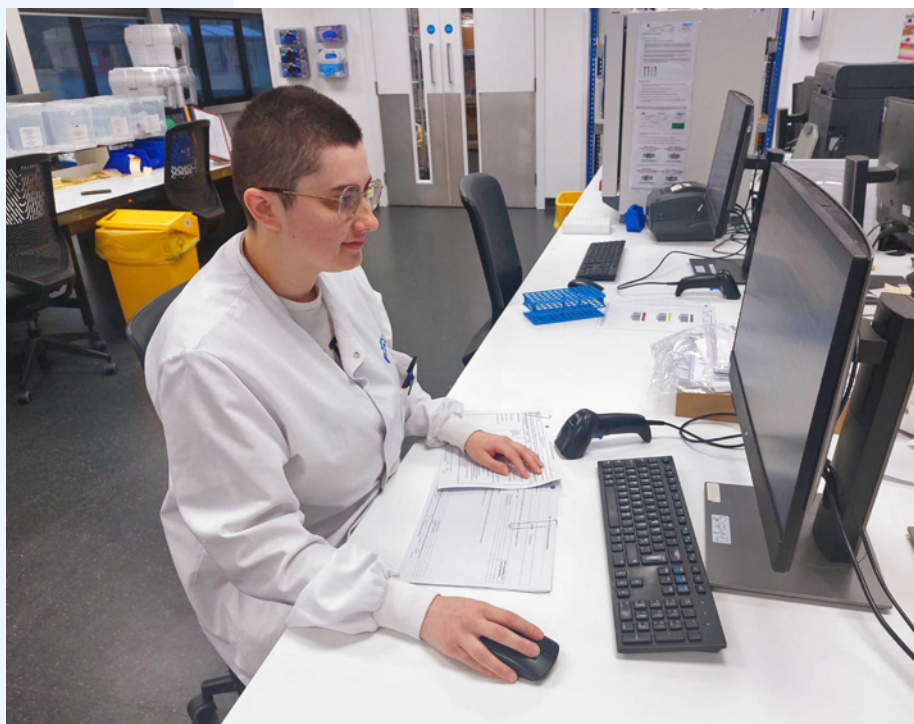


We have found that the team leadership apprenticeship is seen as particularly valuable and popular with Sonic Healthcare UK staff. The additional learning provides staff with the skills and toolkit they need, as they begin their journeys into taking on management responsibilities.

## Case Study: Alex Hutcheson

Alex is a Sample Reception Processing Officer at our TDL Manchester laboratory and gained a distinction.

*“When I started the apprenticeship, I was looking for something which would stretch me and allow me to learn new skills. It was a fantastic opportunity to apply a wide variety of theories and management techniques in the workplace, using my creativity. I am hoping to further expand my skillset in developing others, quality and project management in the future.”*



Alex Hutcheson



# Sonic Training Academy

We are delighted with the ongoing success of our Sonic Training Academy - a new initiative that has passed its one year anniversary.

The Training Academy's purpose is to go grow our future Biomedical Scientists ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to work independently within diagnostic pathology laboratories.

Each year the academy recruits a cohort of approximately 16 supernummary apprentices to undertake the BSc (hons) Applied Biomedical Science degree over the course of 4 years whilst working as Trainee Biomedical Scientists across our laboratory network.

In addition to the support they receive day to day from their colleagues they also attend regular workshops and practical sessions at our Training Laboratory at the Royal Free Hospital, delivered by our Training Academy team. Through the first year, students have attended workshops which introduce them to key topics in pathology and help them achieve basic laboratory skills.

Sessions include:

- Introductions to each pathology discipline
- Morphology and Microscopy techniques
- Biochemistry analysis and case studies
- Pipetting skills
- Presentation skills





## Sonic Training Academy: The Second Year

Our first cohort have completed their first year of study and are looking forward toward their second year whilst we recruit our second cohort.

We will be introducing a buddy system, where existing apprentices will support new starters and provide guidance and regular catch-up sessions to support in a smooth transition to the programme.

We will also be introducing an academy dashboard on Sonic Learn which will bring all academy resources into a single place, improving access for apprentices.



*The second year cohort on their first day*



▲ The Training Academy Team

CEO David Byrne speaking with students during an open day



▲ Dayan Lloyd-Hennie putting the students through their paces

Let them eat cake!  
Open day treats



# Sonic Learn

We introduced a series of courses to support initial training within sample reception. The purpose of these courses is to support training of new staff, to give a sound understanding of the principles and processes in sample reception. To ensure samples are dealt with appropriate and in a timely manner. Each course focuses on a laboratory discipline and has a central theme of patient care embedded.

Local feedback has been excellent with managers and trainers commenting that the introduction of standardised course ensure a consistent message and allows trainers to focus on putting knowledge into practice.

As part of the introduction of a new blood transfusion LIMS system we developed online learning to support the training of staff in the system. This was a combination of online learning and short videos which provided consistent information to all staff and an instant access resource for staff to refer to at any time to support them using the system.

Sonic Learn also facilitated the training seminars through an online booking system and completion tracking which support the project team in ensuring all staff were trained as part of the roll out plan.



95.1%

staff completed mandatory training in FY 22/23



27

new courses added to Sonic Learn in 2023



2,277

staff accessed non-mandatory courses in FY 22/23

## Future Planning

### Sonic Connect

We look forward to welcoming back our Sonic Connect colleague Virginia Re from Australia, to deliver another series of workshops. One of the benefits of Sonic Healthcare UK is being part of the Sonic Healthcare Global family, and the ability to utilise and share knowledge with our colleagues from around the world. In 2024 we will be delivering workshops in the following topics:

- Emotional intelligence
- Radical candor
- Building resilience
- Change management

### Sonic Training Academy

We look forward to welcoming our new cohort of apprentices in the training academy. We will be implementing a new buddy system where apprentices for our first cohort will support those new to the academy and the degree apprenticeship.

We will also be developing a new academy dashboard on Sonic Learn which will collate all relevant information in a central place, including guidance notes, details about workshops being run, feedback and contact information for the team.





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