

CONFIDENTIALITY, PERSONAL INVESTIGATIONS, LEGAL ENTITY & ETHICS

Confidentiality of medical information relies on access to information being made only by those who have legitimate reasons to do so, as part of that person's medical care. Breaches of confidentiality are contrary to the Data Protection Act and are considered disciplinary offences.

Personal Investigations

Medical staff should avoid treating those close to them and should not treat themselves (GMC Good Medical Practice). It is similarly inappropriate for staff to send their own samples for pathological investigations. All such investigations should be ordered by their GP, Occupational Health staff or other attending clinician. Confidentiality of medical information of members of staff is no different from patients and relies on access to information being made only by those who have legitimate reasons to do so, as part of that person's medical care. Breaches of confidentiality are contrary to the Data Protection Act and are considered disciplinary offences.

Legal Entity

The end-to-end analytical and clinical advisory Pathology service is provided by the joint venture Southwest Pathology Services LLP, which it is the legal entity responsible for its activities. The contracting structure for the delivery of the pathology services to Somerset Foundation Trust, their associated GP practices and other public and private qualified providers. The joint venture provides the end-to-end Pathology service to its customers via an agreement named the Pathology Services Agreement (PSA).

The joint venture, known as "Southwest Pathology Services", was incorporated as a Limited Liability Partnership on 6th Dec 2011 and is registered as such at Companies House.

The address of Southwest Pathology Services LLP as lodged with Companies House is:

Southwest Pathology Services LLP
OC370482
C/O Southwest Pathology Services
Lisieux Way
Taunton TA1 2LB

The Southwest Pathology Services (SPS) Joint Venture was set up for the purpose of bringing together the clinical and scientific elements to provide an end to end pathology service. SPS is the public facing entity for the Pathology service and as such takes responsibility and accountability for the whole process from sample collection to reporting and for any complaints, claims that may arise. Such accountability extends to any complaints or claims made in relation to the end to end pathology services performed by SPS to the date of dissolution of the joint venture.

Ethical Conduct

It is the policy of SPS to affirm its commitment to Ethical Conduct.

The SPS senior leadership team and Pathology Committee ensure that there is no involvement in any activities that could diminish confidence in the laboratory's competence, impartiality, judgement or operational integrity. All of the activities undertaken are free from any undue commercial, financial, or other pressures and influences that could adversely affect the quality of work produced. This is supported by Trust and IPP policies concerning Ethics, Anti-Bribery and Gifts and Hospitality. It is expected that every member of staff will act with honesty, integrity and fairness in the way they conduct themselves.

The Senior Leadership Team has developed an environment where Ethics and Compliance are observed and supported policy on Code of Ethics. These obligations apply to relationships with patients, visitors, medical staff, Consultants, regulatory authorities, business partners and other staff members. This document is loaded onto Qpulse as [HR 6.14.1].

All BMS staff are HCPC registered and expected to adhere to the expected standards for professional conduct as part of their contractual agreement. All staff are aware of the need to ensure that confidentiality of information is maintained at all times in accordance with Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy [HR 10.1.1], and Information Security / Governance Policy [HR 10.4.1] (available in Q-Pulse).

All staff are aware of the requirement to ensure that all samples are dealt with in accordance with UK legal requirements including compliance with environmental and waste regulations. When dealing with human samples, staff must ensure they are in conformance with current legal requirements and national regulations. RCPATH guidelines – [GGM101] on Q-Pulse