

Southwest Pathology Services are going 'Paper Lite'

And the journey begins with sample transport

From September 2023, SPS will be rolling out a process change for the transport of vacutainer-based samples between GP Practices and the laboratory

This change will improve our service for GP Practices, increase sample quality, enhance laboratory efficiency & reduce waste-paper by up to 40 Kg a week

Why SPS want to make this process change...

The current process requires an individual plastic bag/request form for each patient. This was essential for quality, but vacutainers & electronic requesting mean those individual forms/bags are no longer necessary

Introducing rack-based sample transfer, SPS are able to dramatically reduce the amount of waste, whilst still ensuring that sample transfer is safe, in line with regulations & requires no extra work from our service users

"SYNLAB Green: Reducing the environmental impact of every test we deliver and always striving to protect the environment"



The NHS & SPS have an on-going commitment to try to provide a more sustainable and environmental organisation, committing to waste reduction targets & a greener ethos

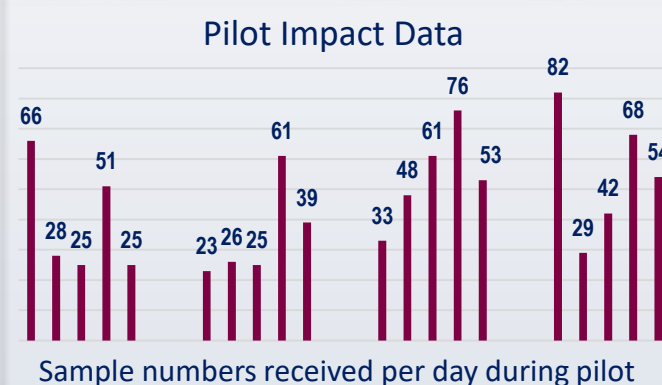


This process change was suggested by team members in the lab & has been designed collaboratively between SPS & NHS service users



SPS are committed to continuous improvement for our service users and ultimately the patient – This change will mean enhanced quality and a more efficient process

Piloting this process change with Warwick House Medical Centre...



In June 2022 SPS approached Warwick House surgery and presented them with our thoughts on a 'paper lite' process, allowing for the transfer of vacutainer-based samples to the laboratory without request forms or individual plastic bags.

They were immediately engaged by the process change, inviting a small lab team to present at one of their practice training days' and agreeing to be the Pilot site for a trial, which started in September and has been going strong since

**As of November 2022

Initial Pilot for one month – continued due to success			
During Pilot	915 Samples	To Date	3118 Samples
	0.64 kg form waste reduced		2.18 kg form waste reduced

Quote from Warwick House Team - "Paper lite has been easy from the start, with suitable racks for the blood bottles and easy transportation. There is less waste, and it is easy to add an extra label to the blood bottle or supply an add on request with the transport bag.

The biggest advantage is not having to replace blood samples into blood bags after spinning bloods and this improves safety as there is less room for error.

Hopefully as this rolls out the extra printed blood labels will not automatically print, and we are able to send other samples in the same way

What does this process change mean for you...

In essence, this change means moving from individually packaged samples to racked samples - Request forms will no longer be required during the process



1 – Place the patient label on the tube firmly



2 - Place the tube into the transport rack.



3 – Place the rack inside the singular plastic bag, with absorbent pad



4 – When ready for transport, place the bagged rack along with any other samples for collection

We would also ask you to consider spinning blood samples before they are sent to lab, in order to improve quality & please be advised that any manually requested samples will still require an individual bag/form at this point

FYI – The Process

- Where will we get the racks and bags?
- SPS will provide all service users with a supply of racks & bags with absorbent pads as we go live – Couriers will then replace full racks with empty as they make their collections
- What samples does this apply to?
- Any vacutainer-based sample (this will primarily be bloods) that has been electronically requested & labelled
- Does the rack need to be full?
- We do not want this new process to delay samples being sent in, so send the rack regardless of how many samples there are. Just ensure the rack/samples are placed securely within the plastic bag.
- How does the rack effect risk during transport?
- Vacutainers are designed to limit the risk of leakage, so if the lids are secure & the racks are within the larger bag with absorbent pad – the process is safer & conforms to UN3373.
- How do we include additional information with no form?
- Add relevant details to the electronic request or use the 'Add-On' process if you need to but we will also provide a proforma to be used for the whole rack, rather than the individual sample – If needed

FYI – The Timeline

- When does this process change take effect?
- We intend to go live in a phased approach from September 2023 – Surgeries will be identified and contacted based upon their courier collection route
- What do we do next?
- We will contact you and let you know the planned go live for your location, we will also ensure that racks and bags are with you ready for the go live.
- What do we do if we have any questions?
- Please see the 'customer service' contact information to the left, where someone will be more than happy to answer any queries or take note of your details to respond appropriately

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Thank you for taking the time to read this & we look forward to working with you to introduce this improvement to the service we provide to our patients