

PRESS RELEASE

Joint venture launches new laboratory set to transform pathology services in the South West

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A new multi-million pound, state-of-the-art pathology facility has been opened in the South West by Lord Carter, who published his review of NHS pathology services in 2008, and local MP Jeremy Browne.

The facility at Lisieux Way, Taunton, is funded and operated by Southwest Pathology Services (SPS), a pathology joint venture between Musgrove Park Hospital, Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and their private sector partner, Integrated Pathology Partnerships (iPP). Sodexo's interest in SPS is represented by iPP, a company in which it has a 49% shareholding.

The hub laboratory is set to deliver non-urgent, routine testing to a population of 500,000. It will form the centrepiece to the existing SPS network of laboratories that also deliver on-site, urgent testing for patients treated at the hospitals in Taunton and Yeovil.

SPS has already installed new, high-tech equipment throughout its laboratories. The joint venture consolidates resources in the area to ensure that funding is available to invest in the latest technologies; making sure patients in the region get the best possible service.

This pooling of skills, knowledge and resources in the SPS model is key to delivering Lord Carter's projected £500 million of savings detailed in his pathology review. SPS is a working example of Lord Carter's recommendations to consolidate pathology services in the UK. The SPS joint venture is set-up to allow other local trusts to join the partnership and benefit from these services.

Geoff Searle, chief executive of iPP, said: *"Working in a joint venture with two NHS trusts has joined the ethos and culture of the NHS, with the pathology expertise and resources of iPP. This has created a service that will drive value for money and deliver the latest pathology innovations available on the market. Our vision is to encourage new partners into the joint venture, to allow other regional trusts and populations to benefit from these quality services."*

Jo Cubbon, chief executive of Musgrove Park Hospital, said: "This joint venture is a fantastic opportunity for NHS healthcare providers to work alongside a private sector partner in an innovative way. The new, state-of-the-art laboratory centred in Taunton will supply patients with the most up to date and efficient diagnostic tests available. As well as providing a service to both Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital, there is also the potential to offer the pathology services to other healthcare providers across the wider South West region. This unique laboratory provides employees with a great working environment and will, in time, benefit the local economy through the generation of more jobs."

Paul Mears, chief executive of Yeovil District Hospital, said: "Here at Yeovil District Hospital we are committed to exploring new opportunities for improving the care we provide to our patients. This innovative partnership links us with the very latest technology in pathology, further improving the accuracy and swiftness of diagnoses and decision making and helping us secure the very best outcomes for those who rely on us, every day."

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