

Real-life story - Saghar Missaghian-Cully

Saghar began her career in the 1990s as a trainee biomedical scientist (BMS) in cellular pathology and is now managing director of South West London Pathology which provides pathology services across south west London and beyond.

Saghar Missaghian-Cully

Managing director, pathology

Employer or university

South West London Pathology, St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



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How I got into the role

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After my biomedical scientist (BMS) training in cellular pathology, I did a Master's which enabled me to look for opportunities to become a senior BMS. I had a keen interest in training and the first role I went for had additional responsibility as training officer for cellular pathology.

In addition to my day job I also became a training and development manager for a number of specialist laboratories at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital. I was then encouraged to take on the new role of quality and governance manager for the five laboratories.

Pathology services at Guys and St Thomas' went through a restructure and formed a private joint venture organisation and I was able to move into the role of divisional manager.

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What I do

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I am the managing director for South West London Pathology, which is an NHS partnership set up in 2014 by St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust and Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. We provide a single, integrated pathology service across south west London and beyond.

We process more than 17 million tests per year serving 3.5 million people across south west London via three hospitals, 200 GP practices and 30 healthcare centres.

I lead and direct the organisation and promote what we do as a leading provider of innovative pathology services. It's important that I build and maintain a strong working relationship with our partners, service users, commissioners and prospective customers. I need to have a good understanding of what they want and need from a pathology provider – both now and in the future.

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**The best bits
and challenges**

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Throughout my career I've always embraced opportunities. Change can be challenging but it is also great as it creates lots of new opportunities.

I'm privileged to meet and interact with a wide range of people both within and outside the organisation. I thoroughly enjoy leading the service and making tough decisions, while motivating and encouraging colleagues.

I've always had a thirst for learning and personal development so I studied for a professional Doctorate while working full time. The broad range of experience I gained in the various managerial posts in training, quality and general management has been key in preparing me for my current role.

Life as a director can be lonely so you have to make sure you bring everyone with you.

- **Life outside work**

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I have two young, active and busy children! I'm also involved in the Baha'i community and enjoy socialising with friends and going to the theatre.

- **Career plans and top tips for others**

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Never be afraid of change - embrace it! Seek to find out more about the organisation you work for and make yourself known to senior management – in a good way!

My final piece of advice would be that anyone can do anything. If you see an opportunity, don't be afraid to try.