

Leeds blood transfusion service live with Clinisys WinPath

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust successfully updates its pathology laboratory information system, supporting a new digital way of working which will ultimately support innovation across West Yorkshire

The blood transfusion service in Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has started working with a new LIMS, as part of a larger project to deploy a single LIMS across the West Yorkshire Association of Acute Trusts.

The blood transfusion laboratories at Leeds General Infirmary and St James' University Hospital are now live with Clinisys WinPath, in a move that will support modern, digital working.

The labs adopted Clinisys' order communications system, known as 'ICE', as part of the go-live. This could not be suitably integrated with the previous system, which was installed a number of years ago. The lab also upgraded the blood tracking system, adding increased functionality.

The new ICE functionality will enable clinicians to access blood test results much faster than the old paper reporting process, supporting quicker patient diagnosis and improved outcomes.

The implementation will also inform the roll-out of Clinisys WinPath to other pathology disciplines at Leeds Teaching Hospitals and, eventually, all the labs in WYAAT's network of six trusts.

Stephen Stephenson, head of profession for pathology at Leeds Teaching Hospitals, said: "NHS England has been encouraging the formation of pathology networks, in response to reports from Lord Carter of Coles.

"We have been moving in that direction for some time, so we are ahead of the curve and one of the things that we recognised early on was that a single LIMS was crucial to the future of pathology services across our region.

"A single LIMS will enable our trusts to standardise working practices and reporting procedures, invest in new equipment and be ready for the future development and introduction of AI.

"The Leeds go-live is an important step in a huge change programme that will create a platform to build on in the future."

WYAAT is making a significant investment in pathology, with the creation of a state-of-the-art Centre for Laboratory Medicine in Leeds to underpin the transformation of services across the region.

The centre will consolidate some pathology services, creating a better working environment for staff and opening up opportunities to new and innovative testing methods.

To support these developments, the collaborative chose Clinisys WinPath as its single LIMS three years ago. The blood transfusion laboratories in Airedale and Bradford went live last year, followed by the Leeds laboratory in November 2023.

Janine Bontoft, WYAAT LIMS implementation manager, said the collaborative decided to start with blood transfusion because it is a highly regulated service - and did not require a lot of work to standardise tests and working methods that other disciplines need to complete prior to adopting the new technology.

She added, "The new LIMS will also enable us to introduce bedside blood tracking and integrated blood fridges to improve patient safety and make the best use of blood products, which are a precious resource.

"Leeds was our third trust to go-live with blood transfusion, and from a technical standpoint it was the smoothest so far as we took learnings from our two previous go-lives. Now it is live, we can move on to implementing Clinisys WinPath at the three remaining blood transfusion laboratories within WYAAT and start planning for blood sciences and microbiology implementation in Leeds.

"The new LIMS is a key-enabler for the transformation of pathology services across our region, as it will support our trusts to deliver the best possible care for patients."

The major building work on the Centre for Laboratory Medicine was completed in September. There is some final finishing work is complete, but once this is done and the roll-out of the single LIMS has progressed further, the pathology network will undertake a big refresh of its equipment.

Gayle Sugden, discipline design group lead for the blood transfusion LIMS implementation, said professionals were understandably nervous about all the changes, after working with their previous LIMS for so long.

However, staff are supporting each other through the change and GPs, midwives and other clinicians who rely on the blood transfusion service are already seeing the benefits of the ICE and LIMS integration.

"Every one of us is a patient", she said. "So, whatever we can do to improve services for patients across the region has to be worthwhile - everyone benefits."

Tony Murphy, senior project manager, Clinisys, said: "From a Clinisys perspective, this was a very successful go-live. It puts WYAAT on the road to deploying a stable, safe, and modern LIMS across its pathology network, which it rightly recognises as the foundation for the transformation of services in the years ahead.

"We very much look forward to continuing to support the network with its plans and seeing them come to fruition."

ENDS

Notes to editor:

About Clinisys

Clinisys enables healthier and safer communities as a global provider of intelligent diagnostic informatics solutions and expertise that redefine the modern laboratory across healthcare, life sciences, public health and safety. Millions of laboratory results and data insights are generated every day using Clinisys' platform and cloud-based solutions in over 3,000 laboratories across 34 countries.

About WYAAT

WYAAT is an innovative provider collaborative that brings together six trusts: Airedale, Bradford, Calderdale and Huddersfield, Harrogate, Leeds Teaching Hospitals and Mid Yorkshire. The six hospital trusts work together through WYAAT because they believe that the health and care challenges and opportunities facing West Yorkshire and Harrogate cannot be solved by each hospital working alone. By working together as a partnership of hospital trusts, WYAAT is helping to address health inequalities for the 2.7 million people who live across West Yorkshire and Harrogate, so that all patients can receive the same high level of care, no matter where they live.