

North West Anglia works with Clinisys to modernise pathology services

NHS trust replaces two laboratory information systems with single instance of Clinisys WinPath, extends use of the ICE order communication system, and plans further projects in line with its digital strategy

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust has replaced two, legacy laboratory information systems with a single instance of Clinisys WinPath.

The trust, which serves a catchment of 800,000 patients in North Cambridgeshire and South Lincolnshire, found itself with two LIMS when it was formed out of the merger of Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals and Hinchingsbrooke Health Care in 2017.

The new LIMS, plus an extension of the ICE order communications and results reporting system to Hinchingsbrooke, will bring benefits for patients, staff and GPs by reducing reliance upon paper and delivering faster results to GPs and patients, regardless of where blood samples are taken or tested.

In addition, the new system harmonises working practices and makes it easier for clinicians to view the results of tests taken across the trust's three hospital sites.

The LIMS and ICE deployments also align with the trust's digital strategy to integrate a reduced number of IT systems with a new electronic patient record and will enable further digital improvement projects and the maturing of the pathology network with neighbouring trusts.

Pathology services manager Matthew Smith said: "We had two, old systems from when our trusts merged. Our vision is a single LIMS and a single order communications system, with a harmonised workflow and a single viewer for clinicians, and we have taken an important step towards delivering that.

"The trust also wants to reduce the number of IT systems that it uses, and we are aligned with that by reducing the number of LIMS we have in use from two to one, and interfacing with other systems, including the electronic records used in maternity and ED.

"Moving to a new, modern system enables us to improve efficiency at our laboratories and will support the delivery of further projects that will bring patient safety and sustainability benefits, by removing paper and plastic from our workflows."

The pathology service at Hinchingsbrooke was using an older Clinisys product, but the lab at Peterborough and Stamford hospitals was using a legacy system installed around 30 years ago. The deployment of Clinisys WinPath enables them to benefit from the advances in pathology IT that have been made since then.

The trust's pathology service is working towards using Clinisys' data and analysis tools to automatically collect and submit NHS England's Cancer Outcomes and Services Dataset and to gain more insight into the performance of the labs.

The go-lives will also enable further projects, including the introduction of bedside labelling on hospital wards that will support pass through numbering, and the removal of paper forms and plastic transport bags required for the blood tests collected by the phlebotomy service and GPs.

Kevin Hall, LIMS programme director, said: "This project was delivered on time, in 18-months, thanks to the hard work and planning of the pathology and digital teams, working closely with our supplier, Clinisys.

“Everybody has commented how calm and organised the lab has been since transitioning to the new LIMS. You simply wouldn’t have known we had just gone live with such a significant IT project.

“I would like to thank the teams for their hard work and pragmatism – they knew what was required of them, and they all delivered. A very professional performance by super teams!”

The trust is now using the same pathology LIMS platform as one of the other two trusts in the ME-5 pathology network. This achievement will enable greater interoperability across the network.

NHS England is encouraging labs to join pathology networks to improve the efficiency and quality of laboratory services, and using a common LIMS will make it easier for labs to share resources and standardise processes.

Jamie Stephens, project manager at Clinisys, said: “This was an exemplary deployment project, and that was down to excellent communication with the trust - it really felt like we were working as part of a single team.

“The reaction to the new LIMS and the roll-out of ICE to Hinchingsbrooke has been very positive, and it’s good to see that the trust wants to push on and use its new systems to further modernise its pathology services.”

Michelle Reece, senior biomedical scientist, blood transfusion, said: “Having a combined NWAngliaFT patient transfusion history including previous groups, antibodies and special requirements will improve patient safety enormously, and reduce the requirement for additional sampling and pre-transfusion testing for patients having shared care across the two sites.”

Robin Lucas-Evans, point of care testing coordinator, said: “The new LIMS has enabled NWAngliaFT to provide total visibility of POCT results to all frontline staff across our hospitals in near-real time, enabling us to move away entirely from paper-based data entry and archiving systems.

“For the first time, clinical staff will be able to see all POCT results in ICE. Users will no longer need to generate request forms for their patients, and results will appear in ICE near-instantaneously - whereas it used to take between two and five working days for the internal post and manual entry.”

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.