

**Media release – 11 November 2024**

## **Northern Ireland's laboratory services reach another IT milestone**

### **Clinisys WinPath go-lives at Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the cervical cytology screening service complete phase three of the CoreLIMS programme to transform pathology services across the country**

The transformation of pathology services across Northern Ireland has achieved another milestone, with the completion of phase three of the CoreLIMS programme to deploy Clinisys WinPath to all five health and social care trusts and the blood transfusion service.

Phase three was completed in late October, when Northern Health and Social Care Trust went live with the laboratory information management system in blood sciences and microbiology, and the national cervical cytology screening service hosted by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust adopted the LIMS.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust also completed its deployment by implementing the blood transfusion module. Health minister Mike Nesbitt paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of all those involved.

“I would like to acknowledge all the teams and individuals involved in the latest, successful implementation,” he said. “Congratulations to the Business Services Organisation CoreLIMS project team and Northern trust laboratory staff for all their hard work and dedication.

“A world class digital healthcare service is at the heart of our future healthcare needs. This will enable us to better manage demand, standardise reporting across the health service, and ensure a better service for patients.”

The pathology transformation programme was set up to create an integrated, regional laboratory service to streamline management, standardise ways of working, modernise working conditions, and improve access for patients.

The CoreLIMS programme is a key enabler for these ambitions. It has to be aligned with other IT developments, including the roll-out of a new electronic patient record and imaging system at each trust as part of the Encompass programme to create a single, digital health record for every citizen.

Despite this complex environment, the programme has proceeded successfully since the first trusts, Belfast and South Eastern, went live with Clinisys WinPath last November.

In the second phase of the project, the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service went live at the start of June and all of Northern Ireland's laboratories went live with cellular pathology to prepare for the cervical cytology service implementation.

The successful completion of phase three means just Southern and Western trusts still need to go live, and this should happen next year. Karin Jackson, chief executive of NIBT, said: “Years of preparation, testing, testing, and hard work have brought the CoreLIMS project to this point.

“Yet again, this has been tremendous work by an amazing team. Well done to all trust staff, the BSO and Clinisys on another great milestone achieved on this CoreLIMS expedition.”

Pathology services in Northern Ireland cost around £100 million each year and employ more than 1,100 staff at 12 laboratory sites to provide a 24/7 service that carries out more than 40 million tests per year.

The CoreLIMS project is not just delivering modern IT to these services, but laying the foundations for further developments, including digital pathology and the use of AI.

Melissa Cochrane, head of programmes delivery at the BSO IT Services division, said one benefit of having the same LIMS in use at the NIBTS and trusts is that it will be able to implement 'vein to vein' blood tracking from early 2026.

"We have a blood production and tracking project that we are very proud of," she said. "We will know where all our blood is at any given time, which is making the system much more efficient, and safer."

Robin Bell, senior project manager at Clinisys, said the phase three go-lives had gone smoothly, and that was down to the efforts that had been done early in the project to standardise tests, harmonise workflows, and test the new LIMS.

"I would also like to thank all the project managers, IT and laboratory staff for their hard work," he says. "It is because of the hours they put in upfront that everything went smoothly on the day."

"The success of the latest go-lives with Clinisys WinPath bode well for the rest of the project, because we will be using the same approach, and the trusts are learning from each other as they go."

"We look forward to completing this programme on time or even ahead of time, and to seeing it improve laboratory and clinical services that will transform patient care in Northern Ireland."

**ENDS**

### **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.