

Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust to deploy new laboratory information system from CliniSys

- **WinPath Enterprise will support harmonised working practices at pathology services around Greater Manchester**
- **The investment aligns with the Trust's IT strategy and move towards cloud-first computing**
- **New LIMS system will help the Trust and partners deliver around 30 million tests a year for a population of 1.2 million people.**

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust, one of the largest NHS organisations in the country based in Greater Manchester, is working with CliniSys to deploy a single, laboratory information system across its pathology services to improve clinical practice and patient care.

The Trust, which was formed last October when Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust formally merged with The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust to create a new single Trust, will use WinPath Enterprise to support harmonised working practices at its laboratories.

This will make it easier for the single pathology team to share expertise and resources and to deliver a faster testing service for GPs, local hospitals, and nearby Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, which is part of a shared pathology service called PAWS (Pathology at Wigan and Salford).

Ian Grant, Diagnostics & Pharmacy (D&P) digital portfolio lead and programme director at the Northern Care Alliance, said: "The catalyst for moving to a single LIMS is to support the single pathology team, ensuring that they can work smarter.

"At the moment, if Salford is short of resource, the teams at the hospital sites previously run under the former Pennine Acute Trust can't send people to assist, or vice-versa, because they can't use each other's LIMS platforms.

"If there is a single LIMS, and harmonised working processes, they will be able to help each other out. That should mean that we can get results out faster, which will improve the service that we can deliver to clinicians and patients."

The Northern Care Alliance provides a wide range of pathology services for its four hospitals in Salford, Oldham, Bury and Rochdale, and satellite clinics run by its predecessor trusts, as well as Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh, and local GPs. In total, it delivers around 30 million tests a year for a population of 1.2 million people.

At the moment, the pathology service at Salford is using a legacy IT system from another supplier, while the pathology service at the former Pennine Acute Trust is using a legacy IT system from CliniSys that is due to be retired.

Teams from the new, joint service are in the early stages of planning to deploy the latest version of WinPath Enterprise, with a view to going live before the end of 2023. CliniSys has agreed to support its old system until go-live.

Ian Grant said the move to a single LIMS and the decision to opt for cloud-hosting is aligned to other IT developments at the Trust, which is looking to merge its patient administration and electronic patient record systems.

“One of the things I am very conscious of is that we have two legacy LIMS solutions that have been in place for 20 years,” he said. “That’s not unusual in the NHS, which always needs to spend any money that is available on patients. But the Northern Care Alliance has made a conscious decision to fund IT projects that can positively impact on care, and the single LIMS is such a project for that approach.”

The move to cloud computing will also make it easier for the new pathology service to work with other laboratories in the area. As part of its harmonisation work, the Northern Care Alliance has created a single catalogue of tests and a single data set to capture information about them.

The group is planning to offer this to other trusts, so their clinicians can order the same tests and view the results, wherever they were conducted.

Richard Craven, CEO from CliniSys said: “We are delighted to be working with the Northern Care Alliance on a single LIMS project that will have a positive impact on pathology services across the group and the wider Greater Manchester area.

“We’re also delighted to be working with an organisation that is taking such a strategic approach to its IT and investing in cloud-first infrastructure. This is an approach that we are sure others will want to emulate, as they look to make a similarly positive impact on clinical satisfaction with IT systems and on patient care.”

Chris Sleight, Chief Officer for the Greater Manchester Pathology Network added: “This is a significant step in our ambition to introduce standardisation and interoperability across our Greater Manchester Pathology Network. The NCA and other network partners are moving to new LIMS platforms and are now working together to ensure standardisation so that Pathology information is available across the network to benefit patient care and experience. Having state of the art LIMS systems such as the CliniSys solution now enables us to introduce other cutting edge diagnostic IT solutions to benefit patients and clinicians such as Digital Pathology.

About CliniSys

CliniSys, headquartered in Chertsey, England and Tucson, Arizona, is the largest provider of laboratory information systems, order entry and result consultation, and public health solutions in disease surveillance and outbreak management across the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States. For 40 years, successfully specialising in complex and the wide scale delivery of comprehensive laboratory and public health solutions in over 3,000 laboratories across 34 countries using CliniSys solutions.

Our combined cross-discipline expertise provides customers with solutions to support laboratory workflow across clinical, histology, molecular, genetics, including order management, reporting and results delivery. Additionally, we serve laboratories in environmental testing, water quality, agriculture, and toxicology.

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