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The Department of Health's (DH) Response to the report of the Independent Review of NHS Pathology Services (the Carter Review) set out the work programme for 2009. The Response included specific detail on how DH intended to respond to the 20 recommendations made by Lord Carter of Coles and his team; and also undertook to report on progress at the end of 2009. This report provides an update on progress in key workstreams and developments over the past year in the DH Pathology Programme.

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Sir Bruce Keogh



A Message from Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, NHS Medical Director, Department of Health

Pathology is a key support clinical service and vital to the NHS and patient care. I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Ian Barnes to the post of National Clinical Director (NCD) for Pathology. In that role he will lead the National Pathology Quality and Productivity Challenge Workstream to identify and deliver the quality and productivity benefits needed across NHS pathology services.

Ian is currently Lead Pathologist (and was previously Director of Pathology) at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and he brings to the role of NCD extensive clinical and managerial experience and expertise in delivering change in pathology. I am very pleased to welcome him to this post which reflects the importance of pathology in the Quality and Productivity Challenge to the NHS.

He will be exploring further with SHAs and others how the pathology programme can align with and support work programmes in each SHA and the quality and productivity agenda in frontline clinical services, as well as working with the other diagnostic areas (imaging, physiological measurement and endoscopy) on key issues such as reducing inappropriate variation and improving access to diagnostics.

We have good pathology services in this country but we know – including from the evidence of Lord Carter's review – there are challenges to meet from changing demographics, rising demand and technological innovation. Lord Carter's work and the practical experience of NHS pathologists and staff have also demonstrated the potential to improve quality while streamlining the way pathology is organised and delivered. Laboratory medicine underpins healthcare and we are committed to ensuring a high quality, sustainable and innovative service for a 21st century NHS.

Sir Bruce Keogh



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Dr Ian Barnes

A Word from Dr Ian Barnes, National Clinical Director for Pathology

I am delighted to be taking up the role of NCD for Pathology. It is an exciting appointment at a time of great potential to transform the way pathology is delivered, and I look forward to working with NHS pathology services and the professions as we navigate the important challenges we face.

Pathology is a key part of all patient pathways, lying at the heart of healthcare and the modern NHS. We have a strong reputation in this country for high quality pathology services but we cannot be complacent about the challenges facing the NHS as a whole and pathology services specifically.

The Quality and Productivity Challenge has provided us with the opportunity and drive to make real changes to NHS pathology, simultaneously driving up quality, improving efficiency and reducing waste in order to give the best possible service and value to patients and colleagues. As NCD, I am committed to working with colleagues in the NHS, professional bodies and industry to drive forward transformation of pathology services.

As part of this, I am very pleased that the DH Pathology Programme is now a Wave One National Workstream to deliver the Quality and Productivity Challenge. We are now working with all 10 SHAs on this and I am pleased that we also have the support of the professional bodies, in particular the Royal College of Pathologists, for change.

Dr Ian Barnes

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Dr Gifford Batstone

A Greeting from Dr Gifford Batstone, National Clinical Lead for Pathology, NHS Connecting for Health

I have been National Clinical Lead for Pathology in the office of the Chief Clinical Officer, NHS Connecting for Health (CFH) for 2 years, having come from a background of clinical pathology and medical education.

My role is to ensure that developments in IT support the new business models emerging in pathology, the uses of pathology data for both primary and secondary purposes and more specifically Clinical Networks, multidisciplinary teams and the development of care pathways. This involves close working between DH and CFH on a number of projects, such as the National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue, decision support for service users and pathology messaging with general practice. The key to this is the development of standards for pathology data and messaging that will enable maximum interoperability between laboratories and information users.

I look forward to working alongside Ian and all our colleagues to bring IT services for pathology in line with the challenges and advances ahead.

Dr Gifford Batstone

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In his annual report, *The Year*, published in May 2009, Sir David Nicholson, Chief Executive of the NHS, advised the NHS that in order to improve quality and deal with cost pressures, it needed to release efficiency savings in the order of £15 billion – £20 billion between 2011 and 2014. The potential contribution from pathology noted in the 2009 *Value for money update* was up to £500 million per year, as estimated by Lord Carter's Independent Review of Pathology Services.

Sir David called for a relentless focus on improving quality and efficiency, linked by innovation and prevention. To support him in meeting this challenge, he recently appointed Jim Easton as National Director for Improvement and Efficiency. He has also refocused the NHS Management Board to spend its time on the quality and productivity challenge. Plans are being developed across the NHS to meet that challenge.

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The Quality and Productivity Challenge

The Pathology Programme has been made one of 13 Wave One National Workstreams as part of the Quality and Productivity Challenge. This is not a change of direction for the Pathology Programme; the Quality and Productivity Challenge builds on the existing national workstreams and initiatives commissioned and funded by DH.

While local delivery will be the deciding factor in the success of the Quality and Productivity agenda at large, national coordination and support of these actions will underpin the changes being made.

This will continue to be based on collaboration and cooperation with the NHS, the profession and industry. This work is being led nationally by Dr Ian Barnes who is working closely with SHA Medical Directors to ensure a high level of clinical engagement.

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Working with SHAs

In its Response to the recommendations of the Carter Review, DH reported that three SHAs – East of England, South East Coast, and Yorkshire and the Humber – would work with the Department on developing approaches to examine the Review's recommendations on reconfiguration. In summer 2009 all 10 SHA Medical Directors were asked to provide clinical leadership for pathology reconfiguration in their localities. Representatives from each SHA were brought together to identify the work needed to understand the options for reconfiguration and related transition costs and timescales. SHA representatives will initially report to DH by the end of January 2010.

National Pathology Forum

Nominees from each SHA who are leading on change in their localities were also invited to join the National Pathology Forum, an interactive group which will develop cooperative working and peer support. The Forum will focus on what is needed to deliver productivity and quality improvements across SHAs including challenges to implementation and delivery solutions.

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The NHS itself is best placed to know how quality and productivity improvements can be made. The Pathology Programme is committed to working in close partnership with the NHS, the professions and industry to deliver change and support innovation in pathology. DH has commissioned Digital Public to develop and deliver a stakeholder engagement programme which will provide a voice for NHS pathology services and other key stakeholders to feed into the national strategy and it will also keep them in touch with national developments.

Pathology Programme
Department of Health
Room 415 Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG

pathology.modernisation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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Accrediting Pathology Point of Care Testing

Throughout 2009 the Pathology Programme continued to work with UKAS on the development of an approach to the accreditation of pathology Point of Care Testing. Having worked with key stakeholder groups to test and challenge the proposed approach developed by UKAS, DH will in 2010 assess the impact of the options available, before consulting on the potential approach later in the year.

Another strand of this work commissioned by DH has seen Skills for Health develop a national competence framework for pathology Point of Care Testing. Additionally, e-Learning for Healthcare are producing e-learning material as a training resource for those delivering Point of Care Testing.

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Lord Carter recommended that DH should develop commissioning guidance on pathology and the Department accepted this recommendation.

Commissioning for pathology services is complex. There is developing good practice in some areas, while in others further development is needed. The Pathology Programme is working with the NHS to identify what support would be useful to PCTs and commissioners and how pathology might be commissioned more effectively to deliver the quality and productivity benefits the NHS needs.

Review of Specialist Pathology Services

DH commissioned a review of specialist pathology services which is expected to deliver recommendations shortly.

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Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) is a UK-wide initiative. In November 2008 the four UK Health Departments set out their proposals to modernise prospective career pathways for the totality of the healthcare science workforce, including those working in pathology. The plans included structured training programmes to produce different types of practitioners on the basis of changing scientific and technological advances, new and evolving models of healthcare provision and patient demographics.

Following engagement with stakeholders on aspects of detail, and the several steps involved in the policy development process the four UK Health Departments are in the final stages of producing the policy and consultation response, due shortly.

In England, the policy proposals will be accompanied by an Action Plan setting out how MSC will be implemented through the Strategic Health Authorities' new workforce planning, education and training arrangements. These were set out in *A High Quality Workforce* which accompanied the NHS *Next Stage Review*.

The delivery of high quality, patient-centred care is the key driver of the vision underpinning Modernising Scientific Careers: of a world-class scientific workforce which applies and generates scientific knowledge for the benefit of patients and sets specific scientific disciplines in the context of cognate disciplines. We envisage more patient-facing roles for the healthcare science workforce than has been the case in the past, and the future healthcare science workforce will be able to respond flexibly to patients' needs, which are becoming increasingly complex as the population ages, and to the changing needs of the service.

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There is now a recognised need for better skill mix and career opportunities across the healthcare science workforce, with the development of expanded roles and higher clinical scientific skills leading the delivery of more complex clinical services.

For the first time, the new UK plans will provide a complete suite of education and training programmes for these disciplines across the career framework up to the most senior positions.

For more information on these and the MSC programme please visit

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Aboutus/Chiefprofessionalofficers/Chiefscientificofficer/DH_086661

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Influencing the Future

High Quality Care for All emphasised the need to foster leadership for quality, to develop and respond to the challenges of the changing healthcare environment. In 2009 the Pathology Programme, in partnership with the NHS, launched 'Influencing the Future', a development opportunity for senior pathology staff. The programme, which is initially running in NHS South East Coast and NHS West Midlands, focuses on developing senior pathology staff who already hold operational management positions. It aims to support professionals who want to take a greater initiative in leading change, exert more influence in the wider NHS and step up to hold positions with significant strategic management and leadership responsibilities.

Emerging Leaders

In 2010 a national emerging leaders programme will be launched. The programme aims to develop a group of pathology medics and health care scientists who will be among those leading the service in the future, equipping them with a greater understanding of the issues faced by high level leaders and some of the essential skills required to consolidate and expand their leadership roles during their career pathway. The expectation is that those selected for the programme will apply knowledge and skills gained from the course to make a significant service, trust or strategic level management and leadership impact.

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DH has commissioned NHS Improvement through its Diagnostic Service Improvement Team to work with NHS pathology services to deliver improvements in quality, productivity and efficiency using Lean Six Sigma methodology.

Seven pilot sites are working on histopathology processes. This work will be important in helping the NHS to deliver the one week wait for cancer diagnosis recently announced by the Prime Minister.

The histopathology sites are:

- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Birmingham Women's Trust
- Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
- University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust.

Four pilot sites are looking at improving access to phlebotomy services. The need to improve patients' experience of and access to phlebotomy was highlighted by the Independent Review of NHS Pathology Services.

The phlebotomy sites are:

- St Helen's & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Doncaster & Bassetlaw NHS Foundation Trust
- South London Healthcare NHS Trust
- Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

The improvements and measures reported by the pilot sites will support the delivery of the Quality and Productivity programme for pathology. Examples of the improvements made by the sites and the impact these have on delivering efficient and effective pathology services for patients will be published later in 2010.

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Lord Carter's report recognised the importance of IT developments in achieving his vision of end-to-end pathology services, together with more efficient utilisation of services (demand control) and clinical utility of tests (pathology as a knowledge service). DH is working in partnership with NHS Connecting for Health (CFH) and has commissioned a number of initiatives to bring this about.

IT Conference in 2008

In July 2008 a group of pathologists met to discuss a range of issues relating to pathology results, decision support, and the development of a National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue (NLMC). This was followed up at a two day conference attended by two hundred people, both pathology professionals and the pathology IT industry. The output of both conferences is ready for road testing to gain the views of other professional groups, commissioners of pathology services and trusts with pathology departments. The key outcome of this work has been a recognition of the need to focus on the interoperability of pathology information and systems.

Pathology Futures Group

A Pathology Futures Group has been formed to enable pathology clinicians to influence developments in their SHAs. It comprises four pathologists from each SHA, nominated by their SHA Medical Directors, who are meeting regularly to develop an answer to the questions – 'What is the future service model for pathology?' and 'What IT is needed to support that model?'

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National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue (NLMC)

The use of a single national catalogue for laboratory medicine will be a powerful driver to reduce unnecessary variation. DH has funded the Royal College of Pathologists to host the governance process on behalf of all the professions within pathology. An editorial tool has been developed to enable an efficient process to review tests included in the catalogue, based on evidence of clinical utility and sound editorial principles. This core NLMC is being used to update catalogues in existing laboratory information management system (LIMS) and in systems for Order Communications; in addition it is being used by the Implementation NLMC Group in CFH to develop catalogues suitable for both Cerner and Lorenzo deployments. It is being developed in a fashion which allows links to information to provide decision support. This work includes the use of default units of measurement and is linked with the DH project on the harmonisation of reference ranges.

HL7v3 Pathology Messaging for GPs

DH and CFH are working with key stakeholders to improve IT connectivity between GP practices and pathology laboratories. The aim is to introduce electronic pathology test requesting and reporting of results in primary care, using the 'spine' and the new pathology messaging standards. Work with GP system providers and LIMS providers has given proof of concept of the transmission of both requests and results as SNOMED-CT coded HL7v3 messages through TMS (the transaction messaging service). This is a critical stage in the creation of true interoperability.

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Lab2Lab

The potential is widely recognised for a SNOMED/HL7 Lab2Lab system to increase the uptake of networked systems for pathology, the accurate and safe exchange of information between laboratories and considerable saving of staff time. This proven system is being linked with the GP Order Communications as a package to roll out across the NHS.

Combining Pathology Data

The exchange of information which has the same meaning when it is received as when it was sent is an essential part of interoperability. Because of variations in methods used, DH has commissioned work on the scientific validity of combining pathology data which has been produced by different methods. This work will be completed by March 2010, at which time some professionally endorsed 'rules' for data combination will be developed. This work will be linked with decisions of the Information Standards Board concerning the integrity of the pathology message. This is an important patient safety issue, as combining data inappropriately can produce incorrect or misleading results.

Patient Choice

DH is working to enhance patient choice in relation to pathology. The Pathology Programme has commissioned a pilot to determine the potential for the CFH Choose and Book programme to enhance patient access to phlebotomy services.

In September 2009 a one day workshop brought together patients, clinicians from primary and secondary care, pathologists, IT experts and others to share good practice and discuss the issues raised by patients accessing their pathology data. DH is now considering follow up for this workshop.



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There is a need to ensure consistent high quality information is available to answer questions posed on both the need for diagnostic tests and the interpretation of the findings. This is being undertaken through three routes: firstly a search through currently available information; secondly the creation of a professionally led editorial process, and thirdly an investigation into the best IT support to provide answers to meet clinicians' needs, link to the NLMC and support other systems such as Map of Medicine.

Interoperability

To ensure the move to interoperability meets its aims of appropriate access for both primary and secondary uses, the IT projects are linked to NHS CFH Logical Records Architecture, the UK Terminology Centre, the Health Protection Agency, the Regional Microbiology Network and the Research Capability Programme as well as professional organisations. In order to ensure quality of outputs and uptake by laboratories there is interaction with UKAS(CPA), the Information Standards Board, the National Patient Safety Agency and the Clinical Risk and Safety Board.

Benchmarking for Primary Care

The development of a benchmarking system for primary care pathology, funded by DH, is progressing. Details can be found on the project website at www.ychi.leeds.ac.uk/benchmarking. Users can register there in order to contribute to the development of the project, take part in the discussion forum for sharing ideas and information, and see examples of the reports which will be produced.

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