

## Press release

**Strictly embargoed:** Until 00.01am – Wednesday 12 December 2012

### **Pathology proposals will result in world class services across the East of England**

Pathology services in the East of England are set to change so that patients will find their GP surgeries will be equipped to respond quicker to their health requirements, from the time tests are taken to giving diagnoses and treatment.

The new plans being announced today follow two and a half years of collaboration between commissioners and the region's 17 hospital trusts where blood, urine and other tests requested by GPs and community clinicians are currently sent for analysis. Trust chief executives and pathology managers worked with staff, their Primary Care Trust commissioners, clinical commissioning groups, patients and others to identify how they could provide services that are more responsive, effective, safe, and give good value for money. The collaboration has produced savings to commissioners across the region in line with the recommendations of the Carter Report.

Following a competitive process, all 17 Trusts were represented in one of the five 'bidding organisations'. Some Trusts made standalone proposals, while others together pitched their ideas for how they will provide community pathology services in the future. Consolidated Pathology Services, Eastern Pathology Alliance, Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and Transforming Pathology Partnerships are today announced as recommended bidders to provide the reconfigured services (*see Notes to Editors*)

The improvements include;

- Increased opening hours to better meet the needs of clinicians and their patients,

- Electronic tracking of samples,
- A rigorous monthly reporting regime supported by a dedicated pathology contract providing service specific performance management.

The minimising of test variability will improve patient safety and clinical outcomes, and improved IT connectivity will ensure efficient electronic reporting of results. In the new contracts, it will be mandated that services meet Clinical Pathology Accreditation and Care Quality Commission accreditation standards.

Over 70% of visits to the GP result in one or more test requests, and hospitals in the East of England currently perform around 40 million of these 'cold' tests, which do not require a four hour turnaround, annually costing over £85 million.

The Transforming Pathology Services project started in April 2010, following the national review by Lord Carter in which he said that "service consolidation is necessary to transform pathology services so that they can respond swiftly to the challenges presented by innovation, system reform across the NHS and reform of the workforce".

Following Carter's recommendations, a detailed service specification has now been developed and has been built into commissioning contracts. There will be consistent key performance indicators, and the quality of the services will meet Clinical Pathology Accreditation and Care Quality Commission standards. The development and agreement of these service specifications has included input from the Royal College of Pathologists, GPs, commissioners, patients and all acute trusts within the region.

Andrew MacPherson, Director of Customer Service Strategy and the Strategic Projects Team at NHS Midlands and East, which led the co-ordination of the plans, said: "There are already some excellent pathology services in our region, and the purpose of this reconfiguration is to ensure that the quality of this service extends across the whole of East of England, where patients will benefit from swift diagnoses by their GPs and other community physicians receiving fast and accurate returns. There is now a shared vision for the future, with new relationships

between the Trusts which provide pathology services and with the commissioners who pay for them. The ground is now laid for increasingly innovative and effective models of service delivery. We are grateful to everyone involved for their contributions, particularly during a challenging period of exciting transition for the NHS'

Dr Ian Barnes, National Clinical Director for Pathology, congratulated the Trusts and commissioners on their plans which effectively address the current QIPP (Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention) challenges as well as acknowledging commissioning pressures. He added "Pathology reconfiguration projects elsewhere in the country could benefit from similar determined collaboration".

Dr Paul Husselbee, Co-Chair of the Project Board, said: "Patients can be reassured that their GPs will still be able to order tests, as they do now. Similarly, patients in hospital who need the faster 'hot tests', which are processed within four hours, will still have their tests conducted on site to aid a speedy diagnoses. The valuable reports that are generated from these tests will be available electronically for immediate access by GPs so as to avoid duplication and reduce the amount of time that patients have to wait for their results. GPs will also benefit from easy access to consultant advice whenever required."

ENDS

### **Notes to Editors**

- The bidding groups and awards are as follows;  
*Consolidated Pathology Services* – comprised of Luton & Dunstable NHS Foundation Trust, Bedford Hospital NHS Trust. Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust – will be responsible for:  
Basildon  
Thurrock  
West Essex  
Herts Valley  
East & North Herts  
Southend  
Bedfordshire  
Luton

Bidders will now be in discussions with their respective CCGs to finalise commissioning requirements by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

*Eastern Pathology Alliance* – comprised of James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn NHS Foundation Trust, Norfolk & Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust - will be responsible for;

South Norfolk

Norwich

West Norfolk

North Norfolk

Great Yarmouth & Waveney

Bidders will now be in discussions with their respective CCGs to finalise commissioning requirements by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

*Peterborough & Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust* will be responsible for:

Peterborough

Wisbech

Bidders will now be in discussions with their respective CCGs to finalise commissioning requirements by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

*Transforming Pathology Partnerships* – comprised of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust, East & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust, Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust, Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust, Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust, West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust - will be responsible for;

Cambridgeshire

W Suffolk

E Suffolk

NE Essex

Mid Essex

Bidders will now be in discussions with their respective CCGs to finalise commissioning requirements by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

- Clinical expertise has been key to ensuring the success of the Transforming Pathology Services project. The Project Board comprises commissioners, providers, clinicians and Dr Paul Husselbee (Accountable Officer for Southend CCG), has been Co-Chair since the start of the restructuring process in April 2011. Andrew Morgan, Chief Executive of NHS Norfolk, Great Yarmouth and Waveney, is the former Co-Chair.
- The Project Board was supported by the Strategic Projects Team at NHS Midlands and East and initiated by Dr Stephen Dunn. Led by Andrew MacPherson, Director of Customer Service Strategy and the Strategic

Projects Team, this team of specialists work in partnership to develop and deliver positive change for NHS services. Working closely with the healthcare marketplace and the stakeholders, it develops, supports and delivers transactions for the NHS that drive up the quality of patient experience, safety and care, clinical excellence, public service and value for money. The Project Lead was Rowan Procter, supported by Martin Peat and Dr Tim Wrehitt.

- For background on the Transforming Pathology Services project, visit [www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects](http://www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects).

**For more information please contact the NHS Midlands and East**

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