

DELIVERING SCIENCE
SUPPORTING HEALTHCARE

NHS
North West
London Pathology

Annual Report 2023/2024



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Foreword



Welcome to the North West London Pathology's Annual Report.

This past year has been a remarkable period of growth and innovation for our organisation. It was a year brimming with exciting plans and significant milestones, most notably the services across the region and beyond.

Throughout the year, we have diligently shared our plans with stakeholders and team members, ensuring transparency and collaboration at every step.

Our focus on people has been unwavering, recognising that our staff are at the heart of everything we do. This commitment is exemplified by the unveiling of our Training Academy, designed to nurture and develop talent within NWLP.

We have celebrated the achievements of our staff through our Staff Awards Programme, highlighting the outstanding contributions made by individuals across our teams.

Additionally, we hosted our inaugural symposium, bringing colleagues together from across the country a testament to our dedication of fostering a culture of continuous learning and excellence.

Saghar Missaghian-Cully
Managing Director
North West London Pathology

About Us

North West London Pathology (NWLP) is a partnership between three leading NHS Trusts- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. While the organisation is hosted by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust it is jointly owned by the three Trusts.

Through significant investment and transformational initiatives, we are now one of the largest laboratory diagnostic services providers in the UK.

Our organisation stands out in England as one of the pioneers in creating a fully integrated NHS pathology network. Recognised by NHS England as one of the 'Thriving' pathology networks in the entire nation, NWLP epitomises a leading organisation of a networked pathology setting.

The NWLP network operates on a hub and spoke model. Through seven hospital sites, we deliver a staggering 65 million tests annually, a testament to our scale and efficiency. NWLP's services extend their reach to approximately 280 GP practices within the North West London Integrated Care System, serving a population exceeding two million.

By offering unparalleled diagnostic accuracy and clinical support, we empower healthcare practitioners, ensuring they can provide the best possible patient care.



Our laboratory diagnostic services

NWLP offers a comprehensive array of clinical laboratory diagnostics including internationally recognised specialist services, supremely combined with the clinical excellence and expertise within our partner Trusts and further reinforced by our affiliations with Imperial College.

Our laboratories are seamlessly integrated under a single Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) and equipped with cutting-edge technology and harmonised state-of-the-art analytical platforms. This ensures consistency, accuracy, and efficiency in our diagnostic service.

Our hub laboratory, centrally located at Charing Cross Hospital, serves as the nucleus of our operations. The majority of routine, specialist, and non-urgent laboratory testing is performed at our hub laboratories to the highest standards of quality.

Urgent tests required for immediate patient management and treatment are performed at our six Essential Services Laboratories, which operate tirelessly round the clock, 24/7, to ensure rapid and precise execution of urgent tests, underscoring our commitment to timely healthcare interventions.

Our expert services span over 23 specialist areas within our diagnostics divisions.

Division of Blood Sciences

- Clinical Biochemistry
- Andrology
- Aldosterone and Renin
- Endocrinology
- Bone metabolism
- Metabolic
- Oncology
- Specialist protein service
- Trace Elements
- Haematology
- Special Haematology
- Specialist Coagulation
- Blood Transfusion
- Point of Care Testing (POCT)

Division of Cellular Diagnostics

- Histology
- MOHS
- Electron Microscopy (EM) Unit
- Diagnostic Cytology
- Specialist Integrated Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service
- SIHMDS: Molecular Pathology
- SIHMDS: Cytogenetics
- Immunophenotyping

Division of Infection & Immunity

- Immunology
- Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics
- Microbiology
- Virology and Serology



Regulatory Compliance and Quality

NWLP laboratories across the network are accredited by UKAS against the international standard ISO15189:2012. UKAS is the accreditation body for the UK that assesses medical laboratories against ISO15189 'Medical laboratories-Requirements for quality and competence'. Laboratories undergo a four year accreditation cycle with a full assessment followed by annual surveillance assessments for the following 3 years.

Since the publication of a new version of ISO15189:2022 our laboratories have been preparing to undergo assessment against the new standard, which encompasses the welfare of patients and satisfaction of laboratory users through confidence in the quality and competence of medical laboratories.

Between January and March 2024 the Cellular Pathology, Haematology & Blood Transfusion, and Infection & Immunity services across our sites, underwent

surveillance assessments and have successfully maintained accreditation against ISO15189:2012.

Additionally, all these services have been successfully assessed against ISO15189:2022 and were recommended for accreditation against the new standard in all future assessments. This is a commendable achievement for our laboratories demonstrating our commitment to quality and patient safety.

The Clinical Biochemistry services maintained the UKAS accreditation against ISO15189:2012 following a UKAS surveillance assessment at the end of October 2023. The next assessment for Clinical Biochemistry is scheduled for October 2024.

In addition, NWLP laboratories comply with the regulations and requirements of the following bodies:

- The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

- The European Federation for Immunogenetics (EFI)
- The Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA)
- The National Health Service Cervical Screening Program (NHS CSP)
- The Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- The Human Tissue Authority (HTA)

In April 2023 following the submission of self-assessment compliance reports to MHRA, all NWLP Blood Transfusion laboratories were deemed to be in compliance with the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations. MHRA inspected the St Mary's Blood Transfusion service in August 2023, which concluded that the service complies with the requirements of the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations, 2005/50.

In December 2023, the NWLP Health & Safety Committee championed the first health & safety culture survey across the organisation. The survey outcome demonstrated that NWLP has a good health and safety culture whilst in parallel identified some areas for further improvement.

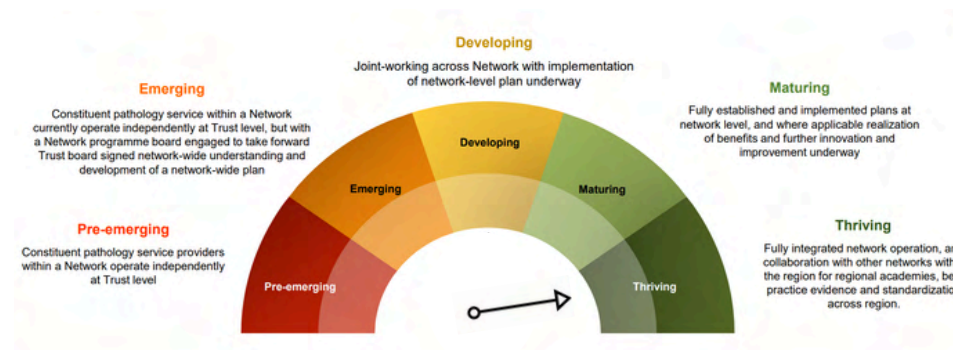
At the beginning of 2024 the Health & Safety committee was renamed to Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee widening its scope to include a focus on staff wellbeing which is an important aspect of our organisational culture and aligns with our value of 'caring' for our people.

NHS England's Pathology Network Maturity Matrix

We are exceptionally proud that NWLP for the second consecutive time we have maintained our classification as a "Thriving" network, being one of the two across the nation achieving this maturity scoring.

The operational planning guidance for 2022/23 committed the NHS to ensuring all pathology networks are classed as mature across all domains by end of 2024/25.

Pathology networks are assessed across 7 domains: Governance, Leadership, Operational; Quality, IT and Digital, Workforce, Shared Supply Chain progressing through 5 phases of maturity, from pre-emergent to thriving.



Our five year strategy 2023–2028

In June 2023, NWLP has proudly published the strategic plan for 2023-2028, charting a forward-thinking path that emphasises innovation, workforce development, operational excellence, sustainability, and growth.

As one of the largest consolidated NHS diagnostic services in the UK, our goal is to lead the way in providing cutting-edge laboratory diagnostics that enhance patient care and outcomes.

Our strategic plan for the next five years reflects our ambition to improve and evolve our laboratory diagnostic services in line with the changing role of diagnostics in healthcare, as well as supporting the shift towards a more preventative healthcare model.

Implementing our strategy

Our strategy document includes a high-level strategic roadmap, outlining a number of critical projects and initiatives that are essential to our success. In the first year since publishing our strategy, we have already achieved numerous milestones, contributing to our strategic objectives.

Implementation of our strategy involves close collaboration with our colleagues, Owner Trusts, and external partners. It is important that we remain agile in delivering our strategy, proactively monitoring the changes in the diagnostics sector updating our strategy as needed to maintain relevance and responsiveness.

Continuing to translate our strategic objectives into well-defined initiatives and projects will enable us to fulfil our long-term ambitions. Our annual report for 2023-2024 is a testament of our efforts towards achieving our organisational vision.

Our vision:

“To be the industry leading laboratory diagnostic service and a recognised centre of excellence, driving cutting edge technological advances and innovation to support sustainable clinical services”

A renewed vision underpinned by our values

Central to our strategy is a renewed vision to become a nationally leading laboratory diagnostic service and a centre of excellence in our field. Our commitment to scientific excellence, innovation and patient-centric care drives us to continuously enhance our services.

Our four core values:

- **Collaboration:** Working together with our partners and stakeholders to achieve common goals.
- **Expertise:** Leveraging our scientific and clinical knowledge to provide high-quality diagnostic services.
- **Patient-Focus:** Prioritising the needs and outcomes of patients in all our activities.
- **Care:** Demonstrating compassion and dedication in our work.

These values are engrained in everything we do, from our day-to-day operations to our long-term goals, these principles guide our actions and decisions, ensuring we remain dedicated to delivering the highest quality diagnostic services.



Strategic Drivers

Our strategy comes at a pivotal moment in the diagnostics sector, where the intersection of healthcare advancements and technological innovations holds the potential to revolutionise patient care.

As we developed our strategic plan, we carefully considered current trends and anticipated significant changes over the next 5 to 10 years, identifying specific challenges and opportunities that will shape our path forward.

The establishment of the Integrated Care Systems as well as the NWL Acute Collaborative are bringing greater integration and collaboration that will drive population health and improve access to diagnostics, placing NWLP at the forefront of these efforts.

Our strategy focuses on synergising existing and new partnerships to achieve these aims, ensuring that we play a significant role in improving healthcare outcomes for our community.

Innovation and technology are at the heart of our strategic plan. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), promises to transform diagnostics.

By leveraging these innovations, we aim to diagnose serious illnesses earlier and improve patient outcomes. Over the next five years, we will prioritise:

- Early Diagnosis by utilising cutting-edge technologies to identify diseases at their earliest stages;
- Digital Transformation by Implementing digital technologies, AI and machine learning to enhance diagnostic speed, accuracy and efficiency;
- Clinical Decision Support by developing systems that integrate vast amounts of healthcare data to support proactive and personalised healthcare management.

The important role of diagnostics in population health, is shifting the focus on prevention by improving early detection and diagnosis.

The future of diagnostic services is becoming more proactive, supported by analysis of healthcare data from a much wider population. NWLP is working vigorously to support the change towards a more prevention-focused healthcare model through the utilisation of our data in clinical decision support systems.

Additionally, we will be looking to expand our diagnostic services with the provision of at-home and decentralised testing, enabling the modal change from emergency-based healthcare to predictive, and personalised healthcare management.

Sustainability is a key theme in our strategic plan. As an NHS organisation, NWLP is supporting the NHS-wide ambition to become the world's first healthcare system to reach net zero carbon emissions.

One of our strategic priority areas is to develop a number of strategic initiatives towards reducing environmental impact and work collaboratively with our Owner Trusts to meet the national targets.

Our five-year strategy is also designed to tackle some of the pressing challenges facing the NHS diagnostics sector across the UK. The aging equipment and inadequate laboratory facilities within hospital buildings, the national shortages in the diagnostics workforce, and the significant investment required for digital and new technologies, are some of the key topics that our strategic plan strives to address with immediate and long-term objectives.



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01

WORKFORCE

A thriving, sustainable and agile workforce that is empowered to deliver our vision

A skilled and motivated workforce is the backbone of any successful organisation. At NWLP, we recognise the importance of investing in our people. Our strategy includes comprehensive workforce development initiatives aimed at enhancing skills, providing career pathways, and fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment.

By prioritising the growth and well-being of our staff, we ensure that we have a resilient and capable team ready to meet the challenges of the future.

Priority Areas:

- Cultural development
- Talent attraction and retention
- Training and development

02

INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Be at the forefront of diagnostic innovation by harnessing the latest developments in laboratory medicine to continuously improve patient outcomes

One of the primary pillars of our strategy is innovation and technology. The diagnostic landscape is rapidly evolving, with significant advancements in digital technologies and artificial intelligence. NWLP is committed to staying at the forefront of these developments.

By integrating state-of-the-art technologies, we aim to improve diagnostic accuracy, speed, and efficiency. This will not only enhance patient outcomes but also streamline our operations, making us more effective and responsive to the needs of the healthcare community.

NWLP is committed to be at the forefront of diagnostic innovation leveraging the latest developments in laboratory medicine to drive continuous improvement in patient outcomes. Priority Areas: Innovation and development Digital pathology toolset Data utilisation and clinical decision support - unlocking the value of data and services Research and partnership development

Priority Areas:

- Innovation and development
- Digital pathology toolset
- Data utilisation and clinical decision support - unlocking the value of data and services
- Research and partnership development

03

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Establish an environment that fosters a mindset of high performance and enables continuous sustainable improvement

Our strategic plan will ensure that operational excellence is the constant driver in the way we operate and that a culture of continuous improvement shall underpin our services and our organisation.

Within the next 5 years we will explore the relocation of our central hub laboratories to a new fit for purpose facility that will enable us to achieve our vision. Our strategic plan will also seek to establish a commercial model that is accurate, transparent, equitable and able to support change in future client base and dimension.

Sustainability is another critical aspect of our strategic plan. We are dedicated to supporting the NHS's ambition to reach net-zero carbon emissions. Our strategy includes measures to reduce our carbon footprint and promote environmentally friendly practices.

Priority Areas:

- Evolve our corporate governance model
- Our estate: creating a leading diagnostics laboratory
- Operational excellence
- Green plan
- Commercial enablement

04

GROWTH AND CUSTOMERS

Advance our market position as a leading provider of laboratory medicine offering an attractive customer proposition.

Growth is crucial for the long-term success of our services. Within the next 5 years we aim to take advantage of new opportunities; expand our products and services; attract more customers; and increase revenue.

Our services are well positioned to focus on opportunities that delve into understanding the needs and priorities of our existing customers. This approach will allow us to develop new services while also focusing on effective segmentation and diversification by reaching new markets to deliver diagnostic laboratory services.

Within the next 5 years, we will assess opportunities through the lens of value creation to build sustainable success.

Priority Areas:

- Brand and identity
- Excellence in Customer Care
- Availability of products and services to a broader client portfolio



Enhancing Laboratory Operations with Pass-Through Numbering

The implementation of pass-through numbering provides numerous benefits that enhance accuracy, efficiency, and reliability in laboratory operations.

At NWLP, we recognise that in the complex environment of a laboratory, maintaining the integrity and traceability of samples is paramount. Committed to achieving high standards of performance and reliability, we embarked on implementing pass-through numbering in our operations.

Pass-through numbering is a system where each pathological sample is assigned a unique identifier at the source, which follows the sample through various stages of processing within the laboratory.

This unique identifier, in the form of a barcode label, allows for precise tracking and management of samples from collection to final analysis and storage. The implementation of pass-through numbering provides numerous benefits that enhance accuracy, efficiency, and reliability in laboratory operations.

Between September 2023 and April 2024, NWLP piloted pass-through numbering with a number of participating GP practices. The objective of the pilot was to ensure that the required hardware, technical and process changes, and integration with the existing laboratory information management system were all operating seamlessly before proceeding to full deployment.

The outcome of the pilot was highly successful and well received by both users and the laboratory teams, allowing us to proceed with the introduction of pass-through numbering for GP and inpatient samples within the upcoming 12 months.

At NWLP, we are committed to leveraging innovative solutions to enhance our laboratory operations. The successful pilot and upcoming full deployment of pass-through numbering underscore our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of accuracy, efficiency, and reliability in our laboratory services.

The transformative approach of pass-through numbering is expected to bring numerous benefits to our service, including:

- **Enhanced Traceability:** Each sample's journey is meticulously recorded, ensuring complete traceability from collection to final analysis.
- **Improved Accuracy and Error Reduction:** By automating the identification process, pass-through numbering minimises the risk of human error, reducing the chances of misidentification and erroneous results.
- **Increased Efficiency:** Automated systems significantly speed up laboratory processes. Scanning barcodes is faster and more reliable than manual entry, allowing laboratory teams to process more samples in less time, particularly beneficial in high-throughput laboratories.
- **Streamlined Workflow:** Pass-through numbering facilitates a more organised and streamlined workflow. Samples can be easily sorted, retrieved, and processed, reducing bottlenecks and improving overall laboratory productivity.
- **Sustainability Efforts:** The introduction of pass-through numbering will contribute considerably to our sustainability efforts by driving a substantial reduction in paper usage.



Expanding Molecular Diagnostic Capabilities

NWLP is continually advancing its diagnostic capabilities to meet the growing demands of modern healthcare. A key area of this progression is the implementation of a new Molecular Diagnostics managed equipment service in our Infection and Immunity division, enhancing the strategic approach to expanding diagnostic services. This initiative, along with the repatriation of high throughput molecular analysers from NHS England, has significantly broadened our testing capabilities.

The expansion of the molecular diagnostic capabilities has allowed the repatriation of referral work, yielding substantial clinical and financial benefits. By centralising all referrals through the central NWLP Referrals Unit, further efficiencies have been realised, marking a crucial phase in NWLP's service reconfiguration.

Developments in Immunology Services

Recent advancements in the Immunology service include the repatriation of allergen components, consolidating all allergy testing services at our hub. The service has also established an extended myositis immunoblot and implemented full bi-directional interfacing of automated ELISA and indirect immunofluorescence platforms. These developments meet the growing demand for community-based autoantibody testing, increase automation, and reduce hands-on time, driving enhanced service efficiency.

Virology Service Enhancements

In response to our service user requests, our Virology team have introduced the BioFire system for the rapid testing of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) samples from West London Children's Hospital and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

The BIOFIRE® FILMARRAY® Meningitis/Encephalitis (ME) Panel, tests for 14 common bacterial, viral, and yeast pathogens causing central nervous system infections. This rapid testing capability helps clinical teams distinguish between bacterial and viral meningitis, optimising patient outcomes.

Additionally, our offering now includes panel for rapid diagnosis of Pneumonia for critical care and immunosuppressed patients, improving accuracy of management and aim to limit broad spectrum antibiotic use for antimicrobial stewardship.

The introduction of rapid diagnostic panels for respiratory infections, particularly for emergency admissions requiring high flow oxygen (optiflow), non-invasive ventilation (NIV) or referral to ITU for respiratory support, improves hospital flow from an infection prevention and control perspective. It also enhances antimicrobial stewardship by enabling accurate patient management in critical care settings.

Future plans include evaluating rapid diagnostic systems for blood culture identification and susceptibilities, which will facilitate the use of narrower spectrum targeted antibiotics.

Aligning Microbiology services with the latest clinical guidance

To align with the latest EUCAST guidance, new susceptibility testing methods have been introduced to our service. These include cefiderocol and colistin MIC testing by broth micro-dilution and vancomycin and teicoplanin testing on the Phoenix system for Staphylococci.

Additionally, a new nucleic acid amplification test for detecting carbapenemase genes has been developed. This new methodology allows detection of a wider range of genes including those produced by multi-drug resistant Acinetobacter. Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales (CPE) spread rapidly in healthcare settings and lead to poor clinical outcomes because of limited therapeutic options. The increased incidence of CPE has significant cost and operational implications for healthcare providers.

The introduction of new susceptibility testing methods and expansion of detection range for CPE brings significant improvements to infection control in healthcare settings that leads to improved clinical outcomes.



Improvements in detecting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)

With the introduction of high throughput, enhanced technologies for the detection of Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea to our service, we have impressively improved testing turnaround times to 97% compliance.

New tests for *Trichomonas vaginalis* PCR and next-generation sequencing (NGS) for HIV drug resistance offer increased sensitivity for minority species marking a significant technological development in this field, further demonstrating our commitment to adopt technological advancements and effectively respond to service user requirements.

Improving Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV) detection in Transplant Recipients

To support the requirements of the Clinical Haematology service, we have introduced PCR for the detection Epstein Barr Virus in whole blood, which replaced the requirement for EBV viral load detection using plasma specimens.

This new assay, which is now offered as a routine clinical service, may offer increased sensitivity for monitoring EBV-driven post-transplant lymphoproliferative disorder (PTLD), thus enhancing monitoring capabilities for transplant recipients.

NWLP at the forefront of antifungal stewardship

NWLP is committed to delivering rapid, responsive, and high-quality diagnostic services, with antifungal stewardship being a crucial component of this mission.

Since the pandemic, the demand for our antifungal diagnostics has surged by 300%, prompting significant strategic changes to enhance service performance. One of these strategic changes was the repatriation of the Fungal Beta D Glucan and *Aspergillus* Galactomannan Antigen service, which has resulted in substantial improvements in service delivery.

Galactomannan testing is a key part of diagnosing invasive fungal infections, particularly in patients with compromised immune systems. Treatments for invasive fungal infections are costly and potentially toxic, often administered empirically due to the urgency of the clinical situation.

The majority of diagnostic requirements for invasive fungal diseases come from departments such as respiratory medicine, haematology, and nephrology.

By bringing fungal diagnostics in-house, NWLP has strengthened its collaboration with these clinical services, fostering a more integrated approach to patient care.

The repatriation of the fungal diagnostics service has nurtured expertise among NWLP's scientific staff, enhancing their ability to develop new assays and adapt to changing clinical needs. This growth in expertise has translated into a stronger clinical service, better equipped to support antifungal stewardship.

NWLP's commitment to antifungal stewardship efforts through the in-house development of fungal diagnostics, represents a significant advancement of our services.

With the expertise and infrastructure in place, NWLP is well positioned to develop new assays that address emerging fungal pathogens and resistance patterns.

The ability to swiftly respond to changing clinical needs ensures that NWLP remains at the forefront of antifungal diagnostics and stewardship improving patient outcomes.



Improvements in Creatinine Testing. Supporting Renal patients

A cornerstone of our services is the support we provide to the Imperial Trust kidney and transplant service, a regional centre that serves the entire North West London area.

At NWLP we take immense pride in leading the field of clinical diagnostics.

Our laboratory diagnostic services are critical for managing kidney disease, supporting over 3,500 patients within the Trust undergoing some form of kidney replacement therapy, whether on dialysis or post-transplant.

Recognising the vital need for precise and reliable diagnostics, NWLP has integrated Enzymatic Creatinine Testing into the Urea and Electrolytes (U&E) profile, significantly enhancing clinical decision-making across more than 2 million tests annually.

The introduction of the enzymatic creatinine assay marks a significant advancement in our testing capabilities.

This method significantly reduces the interference that was the downside of the

previously used Jaffe assay, resulting in more reliable and precise measurements.

The enhanced accuracy in monitoring renal function translates directly into better patient care.

To ensure the consistent performance of the enzymatic assay across all our laboratories, we have implemented rigorous quality control measures.

Our Laboratory Information Management System has been updated to incorporate the new assay parameters seamlessly, thereby enhancing data integration and reporting processes.

These updates ensure that our laboratories maintain the highest standards of accuracy and reliability.

Adopting the enzymatic assay in our creatinine testing service has significant improvements:

Better Accuracy:

Reduced interference results in more reliable creatinine measurements, crucial for precise patient diagnostics.

Enhanced Patient Care:

More accurate diagnostics lead to better monitoring and management of renal function, ultimately improving patients outcomes.

This change reflects our ongoing commitment to excellence, ensuring that we provide the best possible diagnostic services to clinicians and patients.

The transition to enzymatic creatinine testing highlights our dedication to advancing clinical diagnostics.

By implementing this cutting-edge technology, we are better equipped to support kidney disease management and enhance overall patient care.

Cross-discipline working: Improving H&I on-call services

This ground-breaking approach not only addresses personnel resource constraints typical of small specialised services but also fosters a culture of innovation and collaboration. It exemplifies how proactive training and positive organisational culture can cultivate expertise and promote cross-disciplinary teamwork.

Our organisation continues to innovate to enhance flexibility and resilience in our services. In an effort to bolster the on-call operations in our Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (H&I) service we have successfully introduced a new model of cross-discipline working aimed at optimising our resources and improve service delivery.

Our collaboration with Immunology and Virology departments has proven instrumental in redefining our out-of-hours support capabilities. Unlike the H&I laboratory, these departments operate with larger biomedical scientific force and greater staffing flexibility during core hours.

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This advantageous position along with identifying areas for skills development and training allowed us be able to reallocate resources strategically in order to support the H&I out-of-hours on-call service.

Following a rigorous training regimen, our biomedical scientists from the infection and immunity laboratory have seamlessly integrated into the on-call H&I workflow, particularly in supporting deceased donor HLA typing at Hammersmith Hospital beyond standard business hours.

This model of cross-discipline working is in line with the Carter Report recommendations for a collaborative approach between pathology departments to improve the quality of the service while also enabling efficiency savings.

Through extensive engagement and consultation, by establishing effective communication, by clearly defined expectations and shared understanding of success criteria, by undertaking strong analysis of operational impact, as well as providing rigorous training,

development and support to our staff, we have successfully embedded a new way of cross-discipline working.

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It exemplifies how proactive training and positive organisational culture can cultivate expertise and promote cross-disciplinary teamwork.

Looking ahead, we anticipate that this new collaborative way of working will nurture the creation of networks of expertise and empower staff to embrace diverse roles, leading to an enhanced capacity for resilient and adaptable service provision.

The initiative to integrate cross-disciplinary expertise in our on-call H&I services underscores our commitment to operational excellence. As we navigate future challenges, through leveraging our innovating thinking and our collective strengths, we will continue to introduce novel approaches that elevate our services.

Annual Clinical Audit: Improvements in Biochemistry

NWLP services are clinically led, with clinical teams across our services taking an active role in clinical service review and audit.

This year our activities have focused on enhancing our demand management strategies in primary care, improving service efficiency, and advancing communication and teaching within the community.

Demand Management strategies

Our clinical teams continue to work closely with primary care teams to co-design demand management initiatives aimed at optimising patient care pathways. A key focus has been the optimisation of vitamin B12 and folate testing.

To achieve this, we have revised the ordering systems to require relevant clinical justification and inform users about appropriate test request intervals.

This change is intended to reduce unnecessary testing and ensure the appropriate use of resources. As a result of this initiative, we have developed a business case for adopting a new active B12 methodology, which is expected to further improve patient diagnostics.



Improving Diagnostic Accuracy and Guidelines

NWLP is committed to enhancing demand management strategies, improving diagnostic accuracy, and fostering collaboration with primary care teams. Regular reviews and updates to our protocols help us stay aligned with best practices and evolving clinical needs.

A clinical audit on Primary Hyperaldosteronism revealed areas for improvement in diagnostic accuracy and highlighted the need for more specific guidelines to aid clinicians. Based on these findings, we have developed more stringent testing protocols and are providing targeted education to enhance diagnostic accuracy and patient outcomes.

Furthering our success in engaging with community stakeholders, the clinical and operational team from our Proteins services have led a programme of improvements in the use of the serum free light chain service.

These initiatives have already started to show positive impacts:

- **Improved Resource Utilisation:** By requiring clinical justification for certain tests, we have reduced unnecessary workloads and focused resources where they are truly needed.
- **Enhanced Clinician Awareness:** Utilisation of advisories has been instrumental in promoting awareness about proper test ordering intervals, leading to more judicious use of lab tests.
- **Better Patient Outcomes:** The clinical audit on primary hyperaldosteronism is paving the way for more accurate diagnoses and better management of patients with this condition.

Chelsea and Westminster laboratory Service Improvement

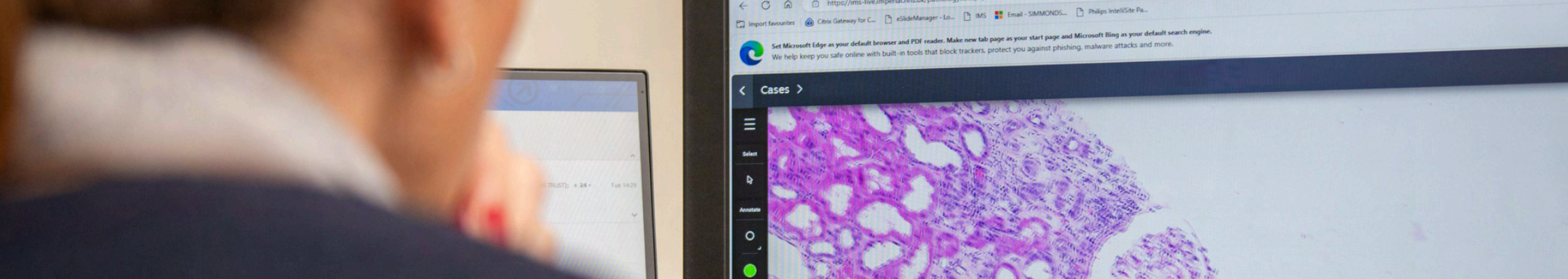
2023 was a busy year within the Essential Services Laboratory at Chelsea and Westminster.

We launched a structured programme of service improvement activities that spanned across different operational areas as well as improve the way the laboratory interacted with the clinical services.

The service improvement initiative run between June and September 2023 and was an excellent opportunity to engage with our local staff, senior management, and external stakeholders to discuss and implement strategies for enhancing our services and tailor it to the clinical requirements at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital site.

Some of the areas the improvements focused on were:

- Resource Management in central reception that delivered improvements in how urgent and routine samples are identified and how they are processed in the laboratory.
- Support during high workload periods that delivered improved communication between areas of the laboratory to support busy periods.
- Workload management to ensure the timely transfer of samples from the Trust clinical areas to the laboratory.
- Strengthened and enhanced the Blood Transfusion service as well as implemented new blood fridges in the Burns unit and Theatres.
- Carried out a Kaizen Event that led to significant improvements, including decluttering the store room, central reception, and manual laboratory and reviewing our document retention protocols.
- Workload management to ensure the timely transfer of samples from the Trust clinical areas to the laboratory



Supporting Faster Diagnostic Standards in Histopathology

The transition to Faster Diagnostic Standards represents a pivotal moment in the NHS approach to cancer diagnostics. As an NHS organisation, NWLP is aligning with the Faster Diagnostic Standards demonstrating our commitment and dedication to improving cancer diagnosis and patient care.

Recent changes in the NHS Cancer Diagnostics standards, have shifted the focus from the two-week wait standard to new Faster Diagnostic Standards, designed to expedite cancer diagnosis and improve patient outcomes.

NWLP are working collaboratively with our three partner Trusts to align with these changes and ensure that that we are receiving accurate case information for each patient.

To support the new Faster Diagnostic Standards, we have taken steps to establish the interoperability between the NWLP Data Repository and the Trust Cancer Registries.

This integration has enabled co-design of dashboards providing agility in handling the priority status of cases, ensuring that samples are handled through the correct and appropriate pathways supporting faster diagnostic.

It also allowed the diagnostic laboratory to have instant access to patient data from the cancer registries to support better management of cases:

- The dashboards provide real-time visibility into the priority status of cases, ensuring that samples are processed through the appropriate pathways quickly and efficiently.
- Instant access to detailed patient data from cancer registries, is facilitating better case management and timely escalation of cases approaching breach status.
- The enhanced data access supports the effective management of cases during Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings, ensuring all relevant information is readily available for informed decision-making.

Additionally, the improved access to data has led to operational enhancements in the service such as improved sample flow management, enhanced laboratory performance, flexible workforce utilisation to meet clinical needs, and ultimately improvements in patient care.

Another significant improvement towards the new Faster Diagnostic Standards was the introduction of a new tracking system that provides comprehensive auditing capabilities for histology samples from collection at spoke sites to processing at the hub.

Biopsy samples from patients are irreplaceable and it was of high importance to ensure that sample pathways are as secure as possible.

The new tracking system ensures full auditability and accountability of these critical, irreplaceable samples.

Additionally it allowed us to audit dwell time and make further improvements to limit the transport time between sites, ultimately reducing turnaround time for the service thereby allowing faster diagnosis for our patients.



Championing Sustainability at NWLP

At NWLP our vision is to establish a culture of sustainability throughout our organisation.

By positively influencing mindsets we aim to design, develop and deliver diagnostic services in the most environmentally sustainable manner while maintaining excellent services for patient care.

We are dedicated to integrate sustainability into all aspects of our operations, championing green innovation and fostering a culture of environmental accountability among all staff.

NWLP is committed to supporting our partner Trusts and local communities to reduce carbon footprint. By continuing to integrate sustainable practices into our operations we aim to create a positive impact on the environment and support the NHS goal to become the world's first carbon neutral health care system by 2040.

Within 2024 we plan to publish our Green Strategy and Plan, outlining our sustainability objectives as well as the initiatives we will undertake to achieve these by 2028.



Focus areas:

Digital Transformation

Several improvement initiatives to utilise electronic means for distributing results, reports and generating pending lists have been championed across NWLP to reduce paper usage and waste.

1. The NWLP Pathology Call Centre reduced the amount of paper reports posted to service users. Paper consumption has been reduced by 40% with further plans to minimise paper waste, unnecessary printing and postage costs.
2. The digital transformation in Histopathology has the potential to positively impact sustainability targets by enabling remote working, reducing the need for physical transportation of slides for clinical review, and enabling online MDTs, thereby cutting down on travel and associated carbon emissions.
3. We have adopted online training for staff across the NWLP network, thus reducing the requirement for staff to travel. Moving training sessions online not only supports our commitment to the green agenda, it also enables more staff to participate in training opportunities.
4. The Data Repository expansion project has achieved the integration of numerous legacy IT systems into a single consolidated data repository. This project will allow us to decommission aging IT infrastructure with redundant IT equipment sent for recycling.



5. Implementing pass-through numbering to both primary and secondary care settings brings a number of benefits towards sustainability:

Reduction in plastic:

With pass-through numbering there is no longer a need to place each individual sample in a separate plastic bag for transport to the laboratory.

Reduction in paper usage:

Implementation of pass through numbering removes the requirement for a paper request form to be sent with each sample, as well as removes the requirement to generate a second separate label for the specimen on receipt into the laboratory.

Pass through numbering facilitates the drive to reduce unnecessary phlebotomy amongst service users.

Reducing Waste



Over the past year NWLP have been exploring ways of reducing the waste generated by our laboratories and a few waste reduction initiatives have already been successfully implemented across the network:

- ✓ Over 1500 reusable NWLP travel mugs have been distributed to staff to reduce the use of single use coffee cups.
- ✓ 120 new recycling bins have been distributed to NWLP sites across the network to encourage greater plastic recycling in the laboratory.
- ✓ Transition to utilising 10ml urine containers from the larger 150ml containers has reduced plastic consumption in the laboratory, as there is no longer the requirement to decant the specimen from the larger container into a smaller one for analysis.
- ✓ Replaced standalone plastic water coolers and cups with water filters in communal staff areas at our Charing Cross laboratories.
- ✓ Initiated an initiative to reduce the volume of clinical waste generated from 'spare' blood tubes.



Our commitment to sustainability is ongoing. As we finalise our Green Plan, we will continue to explore new initiatives and refine existing practices to further reduce our environmental impact. We believe that by fostering a culture of sustainability, we can make a meaningful difference and support the NHS in its ambitious goal to achieve carbon neutrality.



Energy conservation

As part of our capital replacement scheme NWLP has replaced 23 fridges and freezer with more energy efficient models (32% more efficient) that contain environmentally friendly cooling materials (non-CFCs). Going forward we have incorporated sustainability criteria within our capital replacement process so that all new equipment will be reviewed for their sustainable credentials.

We have launched a sustainability initiative to increase the running temperature of our Ultra Low Temperature Storage (ULT) Freezers from -80°C to -70°C, across our network. This can result in energy efficiency savings of around 30% per unit, whilst maintaining the integrity of stored material.

This initiative have been successfully implemented at the H&I laboratory in Hammersmith hospital, and will be expanded across all sites.



Sustainable models of diagnostic care

We are working with the primary care setting to implement sustainable models of care. The NWLP Clinical Chemistry team have been working with GPs to streamline Vitamin D ordering, reducing the amount of unnecessary testing.



Travel and transport

NWLP have been working with our current transport supplier to optimise specimen transportation routes for GP samples. Sustainability will also be a key requirement during the procurement for a new transport supplier in the near future.



Supply chain and procurement

NWLP is working with suppliers to ensure that carbon neutrality is at the top of the agenda. We have already initiated conversations with our major suppliers to explore ways of optimising our consumption of reagents and consumables and reducing clinical waste.

We have also incorporated the NHS Sustainable Supplier Framework 2022 into all procurement activity. Additionally, we have added a sustainability assessment as a requirement to the process for all capital replacement.

Raising awareness and educating staff on sustainability is a priority for the coming year, and we intend to implement a training program to enhance staff understanding of the green agenda.

Digital Transformation in Histopathology

Our digital transformation in histopathology underscores our commitment to improving patient outcomes through the adoption of cutting-edge technology.

NWLP is committed to leveraging technological advancements and innovations to continuously improve patient outcomes. With significant investments in our histopathology service we aim to enhance efficiency, elevate our diagnostic capabilities, and significantly reduce waiting times for critical cancer diagnosis.

Our histopathology service, equipped with the latest technology Philips digital scanners, is now fully digital. This transformation makes our digital capacity is one of the largest in the UK, providing our histopathology consultants the tools to deliver swift, precise, and timely diagnoses.

The digital transformation in histopathology brings significant benefits to our service and the patients by:

Enhancing collaboration - Digital pathology facilitates remote consultations and second opinions, enabling pathologists to share digital slides when required. This is particularly beneficial within the NHS, where limited resources can be pooled to ensure patients receive timely diagnosis and expert second opinions.

Improving diagnostic workflow - Digitised workflows streamline the pathology process, by offering flexibility to workload allocations; rapid case tracking, archiving, and retrieval of slide images and diagnostic information; faster diagnosis of urgent cases; faster access to molecular/ancillary testing; fast case transfer times between the laboratory and the pathologists, resulting in streamlined turnaround times and defined diagnostic pathways.

Improving patient safety - Use of an integrated digital pathology system allows paperless transmission of digital slides directly to the pathologist, reducing the risk of patient/slide misidentification errors and the risk of slide loss or damage.

Addressing workforce challenges - Digital pathology facilitates flexible and remote working for histopathology consultants addressing the current workforce shortage challenges. It also enhances recruitment and retention by offering more attractive working conditions.

We remain dedicated to continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that our histopathology services support the NHS long-term recovery plans, move towards the Faster Diagnostics Standard, and are well-equipped to the evolving needs of healthcare.



Advancing the NWLP Point of Care Testing Strategy

NWLP's unified approach to managing POCT devices and processes has established a new benchmark for excellence within our pathology network. We remain committed to continuous improvement and look forward to building on this foundation in the coming year, with a focus on integrating additional devices that can enhance services within the community.

One of our strategic commitments is to enable faster diagnosis and treatment with the latest technology for Point of Care Testing (POCT).

Our POCT strategy outlines the key objectives to enhance our service and the initiatives we will undertake to achieve these objectives.

In 2023, NWLP significantly advanced its POCT strategy, aiming to elevate the standards of pathology testing delivered at patient bedsides.

By upgrading equipment and harmonising testing processes across our partner trusts, we have ensured that our services align with the latest quality standards, promoting safe and effective point-of-care diagnostics.

One of the pivotal achievements of this year was the extensive consolidation of Blood Gas, Ketone, and Glucose meters under a single, comprehensive contract across all seven hospital sites and into community settings.

This consolidation was a core objective of our POCT strategy, designed to harmonise and standardise point-of-care delivery across the network.

This initiative also supports the evolving requirements for service accreditation to ISO15189:2022.

This consolidation was a core objective of our POCT strategy, designed to harmonise and standardise point-of-care.

Our expert POCT team has been instrumental in deploying advanced diagnostic tools that support critical care and enhance diabetes management.

We have also supported clinical areas by expanding diagnostic capabilities at the bedside with the introduction of additional POCT devices, including coagulation analysers and cardiac markers.

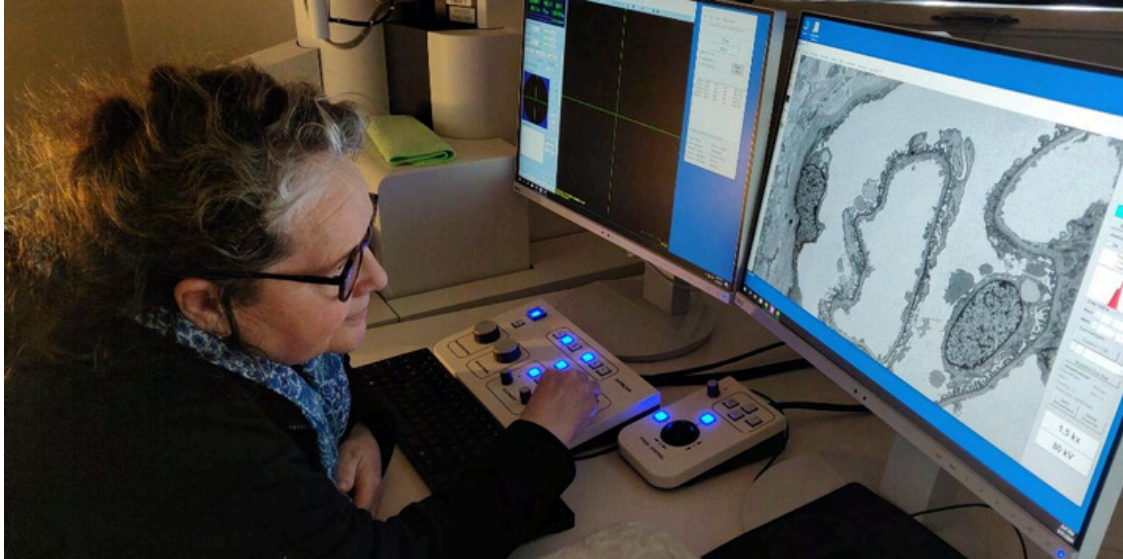
Other areas of improvement that have been achieved whilst implementing the new contract were:

- a robust POCT Software Management System that monitors device performance, manages quality control, and streamlines data reporting, ensuring optimal functioning of POCT devices;
- comprehensive training to over 1,000 users, including clinicians, nurses, and support staff to enhancing their competence in using POCT devices;
- an automated stock replenishment system that ensures continuous availability of POCT supplies.

With these latest advancements in the POCT service we have achieved:

- **Reduced Variability:** Ensuring consistent performance and reliability of POCT devices across all sites.
- **Improved Consistency:** Standardising testing protocols and procedures.
- **Enhanced Governance:** Streamlining oversight and management of POCT devices.
- **Progress towards accreditation:** Paving the way for UKAS accreditation for POCT testing across all sites, especially in critical care settings.
- **Cost Savings:** The unified contract and automated stock system have generated cost savings through bulk purchasing and reduced supply wastage.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Streamlined POCT processes and centralised management have reduced administrative burdens, allowing clinical staff to focus more on patient care.
- **Enhanced Patient Care:** Rapid and accurate POCT results have expedited clinical decision-making, leading to improved patient outcomes, especially in critical care settings.





Our Electron Microscopy service is one of the busiest medical renal pathology services in the UK. Serving Imperial's West London Renal and Transplant Unit, we cater to an ethnically diverse population of 2.4 million in West London, an area with a higher than average risk of renal disease.

Advances in the Electron Microscopy (EM) Unit

Continuing our commitment to advancements in clinical diagnostics, this year we have made significant investments in the sustainability and enhancement of our Electron Microscopy (EM) Unit.

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With over 40 years of operation, the EM unit offers an accredited full diagnostic service in conventional transmission electron microscopy. This includes sophisticated specimen preparation techniques and detailed ultrastructural examination interpretations for both native and transplant renal biopsies.

Additionally, we provide comprehensive services on request for other surgical biopsies, including peripheral nerve, skeletal muscle, skin, and neonatal duodenal biopsies.

Last year, the Renal Unit received 2,500 GP referrals, with over 40% being referred to our clinics. It manages the care of over 2,000 patients living with transplants and follows up with 2,500 patients in specialist vasculitis and lupus clinics.

Biopsies are central to the care of these patients, underscoring the critical role of our EM unit.

Our team of consultant pathologists includes acknowledged authorities in their fields, some of whom are recognized internationally.

Our consultants participate in multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings and other key discussions to support treatment and patient management decisions, ensuring the best possible outcomes for our patients. The EM unit also supports research, development, and innovation to advance new treatments and scientific progress.

Recognising the importance of maintaining a robust and cutting-edge service, we have made significant investments in the EM unit.

This includes the replacement of two transmission electron microscopes, ensuring the continuity and safety of our service delivery.

In parallel with updating our equipment, we have also invested in building a skilled workforce, creating new roles, and supporting career development pathways for our scientific and support staff in this area.

These investments have strengthened our clinical identity as leaders in Electron Microscopy and positioned us as the preferred supplier of choice enabling us to secure external third-party growth.

Our enhanced capability in the Electron Microscopy Unit underscores our dedication to continuous improvement and excellence in patient care, and in parallel fosters growth opportunities, reinforcing our commitment to providing cutting-edge diagnostic services.



Adopting Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) in HLA Typing

With the adoption of Next Generation Sequencing technology for HLA typing we remain committed to advancing diagnostic capabilities and improving patient outcomes with the latest technological advancements.

The Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics laboratory at NWLP has adopted Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology as our primary method for HLA typing.

This innovative approach enhances our ability to provide precise and efficient testing for stem cell and renal patients and donors, as well as immunogenetic testing.

NGS typing multiplex technology represents a significant leap forward in HLA typing capabilities. It enables us to perform ultra-high-resolution typing across all six clinically relevant HLA loci simultaneously for 12-24 samples in a single test.

This technological advancement not only aligns with accreditation standards and best practice guidelines but also revolutionises our service in several impactful ways.

NGS technology provides unparalleled accuracy and resolution in HLA typing, allowing for precise matching between donors and recipients in transplantation scenarios. This ensures optimal compatibility and reduces the risk of transplant rejection.

By consolidating multiple tests into a single NGS run, we have significantly reduced turnaround times. This efficiency gains allow for quicker identification and characterisation of HLA alleles, expediting patient management decisions and improving overall care outcomes.

The adoption of NGS technology underscores our commitment to maintaining high standards of quality and compliance. It enables us to adhere rigorously to accreditation requirements while enhancing the reliability and reproducibility of our diagnostic services.

The streamlined HLA typing service facilitated by NGS technology has profound implications for patient care:

Optimising transplant outcomes

Rapid and accurate HLA typing supports transplant teams in selecting the most compatible donors, improving the likelihood of successful transplant outcomes.

Personalised Medicine

By providing detailed genetic information through high-resolution typing, we empower clinicians to tailor treatment strategies based on individual patient profiles, enhancing personalised medicine approaches.

Clinical Diagnostic Support: Data Repository Expansion Project

This year NWLP successfully concluded the Data Repository Expansion Project, a significant and complex initiative that commenced in 2022 with funding awarded by the NHS England LIMS Enhancement Programme.

The Data Repository Expansion Project has delivered an upgraded and expanded solution, consolidating historic pathology data stored across numerous legacy laboratory information management systems (LIMS).

This data is now accessible via a single browser-based portal allowing clinical end users a more efficient and streamlined process for accessing historical pathology data to support clinical decision making.

The conclusion of the Data Repository Expansion Project brings a number of benefits to our diagnostic service, the partner Trusts and the clinicians:

- **Enhanced Data Accessibility:** By consolidating historical LIMS data into a single Data Warehouse, laboratory and clinical teams can easily access and utilise this information. This centralised approach significantly enhances the clinical decision-making process, allowing for comprehensive reviews of historical results before making final diagnoses.
- **Improved Collaboration:** The unified data repository also facilitates more efficient collaboration with other healthcare providers and associated organisations, including healthcare research bodies. The improved data accessibility supports interdisciplinary research and enhances patient care by enabling seamless information sharing.

- **Operational Efficiency:** Historically, accessing or retrieving data from legacy LIMS systems required frequent support from the Pathology IT team. The new single browser-based portal eliminates these support requests by providing a straightforward, centralised lookup solution. This reduction in support demand, translates to improved operational efficiency and quicker access to necessary data.
- **Cost Savings and Security:** The consolidation of data enables the decommissioning of outdated legacy systems. This move not only improves cybersecurity by removing obsolete systems but also delivers tangible cost benefits through reduced software support costs and the reclamation of data centre space.
- **Sustainability:** The decommissioning of a number of legacy systems supports NWLP's and partner Trusts' sustainability initiatives by decreasing overall power consumption.

The delivery of this project exemplifies our commitment to modernising pathology services, enhancing clinical decision support, and driving operational efficiencies. By embracing a centralised data repository, NWLP not only improves the accessibility and usability of historical pathology data but also strengthens its infrastructure against future challenges.

The benefits of this initiative ranging from enhanced clinical decision-making to cost savings and improved sustainability underscore its critical importance in the evolving landscape of healthcare technology.



Supporting innovation: BOND-PRIME trial case study

As a leading institution North West London Pathology fully supports and facilitates opportunities for innovation.

Many clinical pathology laboratories today experience a number of challenges in their day-to-day drive to provide an efficient service and timely results. One key factor is the ever-increasing number of immunohistochemistry (IHC) slides per year that require processing.

The workload has been driven in part by the backlog in cancer cases, but also by the increasing complexity of the cases, and the cancer incidence in the UK.

To meet the ever-increasing service requirements NWLP has been able to evaluate a new laboratory IHC/ISH workflow solution in collaboration with Leica Biosystems, and discover opportunities for improvement that meets both the current and future service needs.

Our laboratory team evaluated a new cutting edge technological advanced IHC / ISH stainer given the increasing workload and with a desire to be a recognised centre of excellence to support sustainable clinical services.

NWLP have worked in close collaboration with Leica Biosystems to trial the new BOND-PRIME system. As part of the evaluation, 32 routine BMT Lymphoma antibodies and 4 MMR markers were validated and run on one BOND-PRIME processing module over the six-week trial time.

The case study of the successful trial at NWLP has been published and is available on the Leica website.

Implementation of automated post analytical equipment in Blood Sciences

In 2023 NWLP successfully completed the implementation of automated post-analytical equipment across our network. The post-analytical phase in a laboratory setting is crucial for ensuring accurate and reliable outcomes and post-analytical equipment play a pivotal role in this phase, providing numerous benefits that enhance efficiency, accuracy, and overall laboratory performance.

The new compact robotic workstation Pathfinder 350A, that is now in operation in all our blood sciences laboratories. This advanced system is designed to automate sample capping, sorting, and archiving, supporting the post-analytical handling of specimens and allowing for more expedient processing of pathology samples.

The implementation of post-analytical automation in our service has brought numerous benefits:

- **Enhanced Data Accuracy and Integrity:** Automation minimises human error, reducing the risk of archiving mistakes and sample loss during the storage process. This ensures that data accuracy and integrity are maintained throughout the post-analytical phase.
- **Improved Efficiency and Productivity:** By eliminating the need for manual capping, sorting, and archiving of samples, laboratory staff are free to focus on more complex and critical activities. This increase in productivity supports lean workflow practices, resulting in efficiencies in sample turnaround times and a higher throughput of samples.
- **Seamless Data Management and Integration:** The Pathfinder 350A equipment integrates seamlessly with our laboratory information management system. This ensures enhanced traceability and allows for comprehensive data analysis across the laboratory's operations. Samples requiring referral can be quickly sorted and identified using the automated system, reducing the risk of sample delay or loss.
- **Scalability and Adaptability:** The post-analytical equipment supports increased workloads and fluctuations in service demand without compromising laboratory performance. This scalability ensures that our laboratories can handle varying volumes of samples efficiently.
- **Enhanced resource utilisation:** The post-analytical equipment handles the repetitive and time-consuming tasks of capping, sorting, and archiving samples, allowing staff to focus on more complicated and important tasks in the laboratory.

Committed to our pursuit of excellence, we will continue to adopt technological advances and automation that enhance efficiency and improve overall laboratory performance.



NWLP Research Committee

Since its inception, NWLP has been at the forefront of academic and research pursuits, firmly anchored in the principles of innovation and education.



Prof Tricia Tan has been appointed as the new Director of Research at NWLP.

The objectives of our Research Committee are to:

- Develop innovative techniques and technologies that improve patient care and increase our productivity and efficiency.
- Develop or close collaboration with our partner Trust, Imperial College and MRC LMS to develop concepts and technologies that will impact on pathology practice, patient care and to collaborate on educational innovation.

Since 2020, the North West London Pathology Education and Research Board has actively advertised regular funding opportunities, leading to the allocation of over £1.2 million in grant awards.

These grants have fuelled ground breaking research endeavours, facilitating impactful contributions to the field of pathology.

In addition to our internal research funding, NWLP has maintained its National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Imperial Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) award.

This award not only provides dedicated research time for our pathologists but also signifies our commitment to advancing medical knowledge.

Examples of recent research outputs from NWLP's work:

A collaborative project with Industry: PREGGRS Project

NWLP led on the thyroid hormone reference range study for pregnant women in North West London.

This was a collaboration between Abbott Diagnostics, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust Obstetric Medicine and NWLP. The publication is in progress.

This project is now being considered by industry to extend to other analytes in pregnancy. ck directly back into patient care.

Innovation in assay development: an LC/MS-MS assay for peptide YY

Our current peptide hormonal assays rely on older immunoassay technology, and need to be replaced by more specific and sensitive assays to improve patient care.

Recently, NWLP, in partnership with Imperial College and the National Phenome Centre (with support from Waters Corp.), have developed a new assay for the hormone peptide YY which is currently being evaluated for use in the diagnosis of inflammatory bowel disease.

NWLP will continue to invest in research and development that will feedback directly back into patient care.

Supporting Research: Imperial Health Knowledge Bank

IHKB is an exciting initiative that provides every patient with an easy opportunity to contribute to the advancement of medical science.

One of our organisation's key strategic objectives is to develop partnerships to promote and support research opportunities in healthcare.

NWLP is proud to be one of the strategic partners of Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, in supporting the Imperial Health Knowledge Bank (IHKB) initiative.

The Knowledge Bank is funded by the NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre, a translational research partnership between Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and Imperial College London.

IHKB is a biomedical research resource which holds health data and blood samples collected from consented Imperial patients, while they are undergoing routine care.

These samples are stored long term in frozen storage, forming a biobank that researchers can access to improve patient care. This initiative transforms routine clinical interactions into a valuable resource for scientific research.

NWLP plays a crucial role in the success of the IHKB initiative. We are responsible in receipting the blood samples, transfer them to our hub laboratory where they are processed,

aliquoted and stored in the short term until they are collected for long term storage. All health data is then being transferred and stored safely and securely in the Trust's secure data environment.

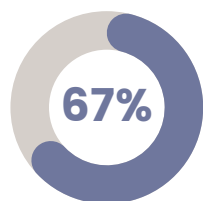
Researchers are able to make requests to invite patients in the database to participate in a research study, or to have access to the data and samples for research studies that could improve care or even lead to new treatments.

Director of the NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre, Professor Mark Thursz, said: "In order to better understand health and improve care, we need a continually updated and rich resource of medical data from real life patient interactions.

"The Imperial Health Knowledge Bank will provide our patients with an opportunity to get right to the heart of medical science and play a role in the development of new treatments, drugs and tests that could have a huge impact on the lives of others."

The Imperial Health Knowledge Bank is a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation in healthcare research. NWLP's involvement in this initiative underscores our commitment to supporting research and advancing healthcare through innovative research endeavours.

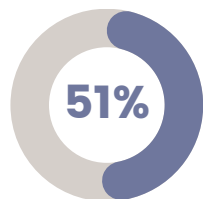
Workforce



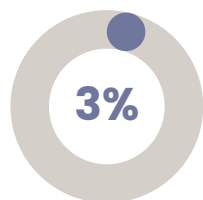
of our workforce are female



are from a black, Asian, or other ethnic background



of our staff are aged 40 or below



of staff identified themselves as disabled

Our values and behavioural framework

At NWLP, our values form the bedrock of our organisational culture, guiding every aspect of our operations. We are dedicated to embedding these values deeply within the organisation, ensuring they influence all our actions and decisions.

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Our commitment to cultivating a best-in-class work culture is unwavering. We believe that a successful organisational culture creates a healthy, cohesive work environment where employees can thrive and reach their full potential. Prioritising a productive and safe work environment is essential to us, with our values underpinning this commitment.

We continually align our actions with these values, allowing them to steer our behaviour and decision-making processes. By centring our operations around patients' health, we reinforce our dedication to delivering the highest standard of care.

The NWLP behaviours framework was developed to guide our teams in embodying our values and demonstrating the expected behaviours throughout the organisation. Through active collaboration and engagement, we strive to weave these values and behaviours into the very fabric of our organisation.

Our ultimate goal is to foster a thriving work environment that reflects our values and those of our Owner Trusts. By aligning with the aspirations of our teams and partners and our shared commitment to public health, we aim to create an environment that promotes growth, well-being, and excellence.



Patient focused

Expect to see

- I am motivated by the impact I have on patient experience, whether indirectly or directly.
- I complete my role to the best of my ability to provide high quality results as efficiently as possible.
- I treat patient information and samples with respect and confidentiality.
- I learn from feedback and mistakes that impact patient experience and share the learning with colleagues to promote continuous improvement.
- I escalate concerns that may impact patient care in a timely manner and ask for help if needed.

Don't expect to see

- Allowing feelings to impact on how you behave towards patients and colleagues.
- Blaming others; putting individual agendas before patients/colleagues/teams; focusing on quantity rather than quality.
- Acceptance of poor practice; being uninterested.
- Allowing barriers to impede or deny service improvement; doing what is easy or convenient, with little or no regard for the patient or colleagues.
- Being disengaged; ignoring/ covering up mistakes.



Expert

Expect to see

- I understand and comply with policies, procedures and reporting.
- I demonstrate competence in practice, and engage in continuing my professional development and learning.
- I strive to do what I say I will to deliver on my commitments.
- I use time, money and other resources as efficiently and sustainably as possible.
- I use quality improvement methods to tackle problems and make improvements.

Don't expect to see

- Ignoring best practice, policies and procedures; taking unwarranted risks or short cuts.
- Making no attempt keep up to date or maintain knowledge and best practices.
- Failing to follow through on commitments; missing deadlines and neglecting to highlight actions when not on track.
- Showing disregard for resources, time and facilities.
- Failing to recognise or act on opportunities for improvement.



Collaborative

Expect to see

- I work as part of a team, co-operating with everyone around me and demonstrate flexibility.
- I respect others' expertise and value advice, welcoming a diverse range of views.
- I contribute to partnerships and collaborations to achieve a common goal.
- I openly and freely share information with others where appropriate.
- I respond positively to reasonable requests for support from others.

Don't expect to see

- Excluding others and working in isolation; resisting others' attempts at collaboration.
- Disregarding others' expertise or views; ignoring or dismissing ideas; avoiding seeking input.
- Acting in your own interests or to the detriment of other teams or partners to achieve your own goals.
- Providing incomplete or inaccurate information; withholding information.
- Being elusive or hard to contact; failing to respond to others in a timely or positive way.



Caring

Expect to see

- I celebrate diversity and value everyone's voice, promoting inclusion.
- I treat everyone with respect, non-judgement and empathy, always creating a welcoming environment.
- I check in on the welfare of my colleagues and take the time to listen to them.
- I address challenging behaviour in a professional and calm way.
- I recognise the efforts of my colleagues and say thank you.

Don't expect to see

- Ignoring others' feelings or needs; making others feel bullied, excluded, belittled or judged.
- Making others feel they are a burden; being unhelpful; ignoring visitors who are lost.
- Condoning or ignoring disrespectful or unkind behaviour in others; failing to challenge it directly or indirectly.
- Appearing disinterested, distracted or dismissive; talking over others.

Developing our Workforce strategy

At the heart of our work is our commitment to make NWLP a better and fairer place for all people, celebrating their talents whatever their background or needs.

During the past 12 months, we have been working on what is important for our workforce in the development of the NWLP People Strategy which we expect to publish by the summer of 2024.



Key themes in our Workforce Strategy are:

Attracting People

We strive to make NWLP an attractive destination for skilled and compassionate individuals. Our goal is to recruit top talent who can deliver exceptional service to our owners, customers, and patients.

People Development and Leadership

We are committed to providing development opportunities for individuals at all levels, equipping them with the tools they need to excel. Our managers and leaders will receive support to build and inspire outstanding teams, care for their people, and create inclusive environments where individuals from diverse backgrounds and abilities can thrive.

Support and Belonging

Everyone at NWLP should clearly understand their responsibilities and how they contribute to our collective success. We will ensure that individuals, teams, and managers have clear objectives and leverage technology to monitor progress, identify challenges early, and provide support in alignment with our performance management framework.

Engagement and Wellbeing

We prioritise caring for each other's health and wellbeing. Our focus is on creating a positive workplace where people feel valued and can thrive. We will foster an environment that promotes engagement and wellbeing for all.

Keeping Great People

To make NWLP a great place to work, we need to provide clear career development pathways. Our benefits play a crucial role in maintaining employee satisfaction and motivation. We will ensure that our people have the information they need to make choices that meet their personal and family needs.

Working as a Team to Transform NWLP

Together, we will ensure NWLP meets the future needs of our owners and external customers. We will collaborate with our workforce to design robust plans that enable skilled professionals to work effectively together, ensuring a sustainable and successful future for NWLP.



Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As an organisation, we are extremely proud of and celebrate the diversity of our workforce, striving to offer the best experience for all our people.

This year, we have placed a strong focus on enhancing our in-house training through the exciting development of our Training Academy. By supporting career development and promoting access to opportunities at all grades and roles across our network, we are committed to retaining our exceptional talent within NWLP.

We are actively exploring dynamic ways to increase representation in Bands 8B and above, ensuring better visibility for staff offered training opportunities and, importantly, understanding the reasons for those not taking up these opportunities.

Our dedication to inclusivity is exemplified by our EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) champions who are passionate about driving positive change within our organisation.

We support numerous staff in supervisory and junior management roles with coaching, mentorship, apprenticeships, and development programmes such as the Healthcare Leaders' Fellowship. Additionally, we have launched two targeted leadership development programmes aimed at nurturing and developing talent among our scientific professionals from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds.

We are proud to have a 67% representation within NWLP of our team members from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds.



Our recruitment processes are inclusive, featuring diverse interview panels and multiple mechanisms for assessing candidates for roles. NWLP executives sit on all panels for recruitment at Band 8A and above.

Our Induction Programme allows new entrants and internally promoted staff to access up-to-date information about the organisation, equipping our workforce with the tools they need to 'hit the ground running' on their first day in their new roles. Our innovative Customer Care Programme places our workforce in the shoes of our service users, improving our communications across all services.

These initiatives underscore our commitment to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking work environment where everyone can thrive and excel.

NHS Staff Survey

As a proud NHS organisation, 71% of our people responded to the 2023 NHS staff survey, a national NHS survey carried out every year to improve staff experiences across the NHS. The survey is aligned to the NHS people promise.

This was the highest ever response rate for our services which enables us to understand how our people experience working for our organisation and has allowed us to work across our services, directly with representatives from across all of our teams to develop action plans for areas of improvement.

Awarding greatness: NWLP staff awards

By celebrating our staff's achievements, we also aim to enhance job satisfaction and retention, demonstrating that NWLP is a place where hard work is recognised and rewarded.

We were excited this year to announce the initiation of our annual staff awards programme, a new tradition designed to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions of our team members.

These awards are important to us as they underscore our commitment to valuing and appreciating the hard work and dedication of our team members.

By formally acknowledging their achievements, we aim to foster a culture of excellence and motivation, encouraging everyone to strive for their best.

This initiative not only highlights individual and team successes but also strengthens our sense of community and shared purpose, reinforcing our dedication to delivering exceptional service to our Owners Trusts, customers and patients.

The annual staff awards will continue to serve as a platform to showcase the diverse talents and relentless efforts of our teams, celebrating their accomplishments across various categories.

This recognition provides well-deserved visibility to those who go above and beyond in their roles, inspiring their peers to pursue excellence in their own work.

The awards programme will help identify and promote best practices within our organisation, driving continuous improvement and innovation.





Training Academy

Delivering Knowledge, Supporting Talent

One of our key strategic priorities as an organisation is the training and development of our workforce. Our new Training Academy lays out a road to personalised developmental training that improves performance and enables progression.

Each of our programmes are designed with well-being, convenience and engagement at its centre. We have a bespoke training laboratory and seminar facilities that enables staff members joining our organisation to undergo the appropriate on boarding and induction as well as those in training to us the facilities for learning.



Our customer care workshop, accessible to new and existing staff, takes the participants on an emotional journey of reflection and feelings, enabling them to see patient and customer experience from a different perspective.

It inspires participants to share experiences, it promotes empathy and kindness and builds upon our values to be caring and patient focused.

During 2023, 283 of our staff attended the course. Overall over 600 of our staff have attended the customer care training.



Induction Programme

At NWLP, our commitment to nurturing talent and fostering a culture of excellence is exemplified through our award winning Induction Programme.



Tailored not just for new employees but also for existing staff transitioning into new roles, this programme aims to seamless integration, continuous learning, and enhances employee experience.

Delivered in our training centre, a new joiner can experience a multifaceted learning journey designed to instil the knowledge, skills, and mindset essential for success. The programme encompasses a spectrum of modules ending with an innovative one-day hands-on course in 'Good Laboratory Practice'.

By providing a supportive and engaging environment, we not only empower our employees with the skills they need but also nurture their confidence and enthusiasm.



This approach not only supports retention but also elevates overall employee experiences. NWLP's Induction Programme's innovative approach resonated not only within our organisation but also beyond.

Our partner Trusts and other pathology networks have expressed keen interest, recognising the potential of our approach.



Student Programme

NWLP co-ordinates and delivers the most comprehensive Biomedical Scientist student placement programme in the country.

Training future scientist is a key priority for our organisation and we will continue to invest in our student programme and work closely with local universities to deliver the right experience for the students.

Before the placement, students get a comprehensive induction and during the placement students have access to a Pathology Education Facilitator who manages the student placement programme and supports local placement teams.

In 2024 we have also unveiled our brand new student handbook.



During the 22/23 cohort we supported 19 students supported and we on-boarded a further 8 in October 2023.

Students who have previously received a placement in the organisation having finished their degree have contact us to obtain their first BMS role within via our student alumni which is evident to the quality of our training and the positive experience we offer.



Our aim is to become one of the leading pathology networks supporting apprenticeships, in terms of both numbers and variety, as an alternative development and progression opportunity for our workforce.

In NWLP we recognise the value of apprenticeship programmes as a way to attract the best candidates, to increase employee satisfaction and diversity, and to improve productivity while reducing staff turnover.

We have recently appointed a dedicated Pathology Education Facilitator to support the apprenticeship programmes and we launched an interactive apprenticeship handbook.

This financial year we have offered 19 apprenticeships across our pathology divisions as well as support and corporate services.

Continuous Personal Development (CPD)

In 2023/2024 we supported over 200 staff members with their personal development in courses; such as MSc studies, registration and specialist portfolio, short courses and attendance at various conference.

In addition to that we also spent £41k on top-up modules to support our non-registered staff on the path to gaining HCPC registration as Biomedical Scientists.

In March 2024 our training and development team launched 'My Learning Today' a novel learning journey available to all our staff as part of our CPD offering.

'My Learning Today' runs weekly and is delivered in a variety of ways which connects teams' experiences and knowledge whilst also serving as a vehicle for new updates and information across NWLP.



Registration Portfolio School



The NWLP Registration Portfolio School established in January 2023 is a comprehensive and structured training programme supporting those aspiring to become HCPC registered Biomedical Scientists through completion of the IBMS registration portfolio.

Since its formation we have built a network of trainers to enhance and fast-track delivery of training and established an online training portal with easy to access content which for the first time empowers trainees to take control of their progress via self-directed learning.

Our Registration Portfolio School offers support with:

- The selection process for interested candidates
- Induction of trainees onto the programme
- One-to-one support for trainees via our Pathology Education Facilitators
- A monthly portfolio clinic to enable and support peer-to-peer learning.
- Access to multiple trainers for marking of portfolio work
- A dedicated trainee handbook
- Supporting trainers with up-to-date information and resources
- Monitoring progress of trainees and provide well-being support where required
- Access to multi-disciplinary training and bespoke audit training led by our Quality team
- End of portfolio mock assessments
- Support on the day of the assessment
- Access to a brand new online training portal in line with the IBMS portfolio changes.

Since its establishment, the portfolio school has enrolled 80 trainees. With our programme we are looking to develop exceptionally capable Biomedical Scientists while in parallel fostering a sense of belonging and pride, laying the foundation for a workforce that is not just proficient but passionately dedicated to shaping the future of healthcare.

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Continuing Success of the Haematology Academy

Our Haematology Academy is a real success story and is more than just a training program; it's a cornerstone of our commitment to excellence in haematology.

This year has seen the haematology academy thrive and build on its success in supporting clinical services by developing the haematology team. There have been several new initiatives aimed at promoting learning and building even better haematology services:

Expanded training sessions for support staff and students

Recognising the vital role of our support staff and the importance of nurturing future talent, we've extended our academy to include dedicated training sessions for these groups.

Tailored programs have been developed to equip our support staff with essential knowledge and skills, ensuring they are well-prepared to support our haematology services.

Additionally, we are offering comprehensive training opportunities for students, giving them a solid foundation and fostering their interest in haematology.



Increased workshops on Blood Film Morphology

We've significantly increased the number of workshops focused on blood film morphology. These sessions are designed to enhance our team's skills in identifying and interpreting various blood cell abnormalities.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting a deeper understanding and improved confidence in their diagnostic abilities.

Promoting a culture of Continuous Learning

The academy has fostered a culture of continuous learning and collaboration. By bringing together diverse groups within our department, we're creating a supportive environment where knowledge is shared, and everyone is encouraged to grow.

We have increased mentorship opportunities with experienced staff members mentoring newer team members, providing guidance and sharing their expertise to help build a strong, knowledgeable team.

Looking ahead we plan to introduce advanced workshops covering more complex topics in haematology, further enhancing our team's capabilities.

Leveraging technology, we're exploring interactive tools and virtual simulations to make learning even more engaging and effective with the development of the business case to procure and deploy a digital morphology solution across the network.

Promoting Biomedical Science

We absolutely love to promote what we do during Healthcare Science week and Biomedical Science day, as just two of many important dates in our calendar. This year, we really took embracing the new generation of scientists to heart by visiting the Imperial Trust Charing Cross Nursery in March 2024.

IBMS Congress 2023

The IBMS Congress is a forum for progressing professional skills and knowledge, supporting career development and promoting the profession. Over 60 colleagues attended the IBMS congress in September 2023 some of whom in the capacity of speaker, poster presenter or leading expert panels.

Volunteers and work experience

Our future workforce is fundamental to the future success of NWLP. Alongside other routes into working for NWLP, in 2023 we established centralised process for accessing volunteering and work experience opportunities across all of our services.

There will always be a high demand for placements for those wishing to enter a career in Biomedical Science, but we now also offer opportunities across all of our services such as Pathology IT, Finance or Quality Management.

The development of an organisational wide work experience programme allows us to better support our teams in responding to related enquiries, centrally place students into areas of interest and manage contractual and health & safety requirements. Central coordination of the programme has delivered a supportive and inclusive programme to provide anyone volunteering in any of our services a positive and fulfilling experience.



GO TEAM!

North West London Pathology
TEAM NWLP



Annual User Survey

NWLP is committed to be a customer-focused organisation that consistently delivers outstanding service and exceeds customer expectations.



The annual user survey is a vital tool that provides valuable insights into user satisfaction and service performance.

By actively listening to our users and making informed adjustments, we strive to maintain and elevate the high standards of our service delivery.

This year's survey results underscore significant improvements in the services we provide compared to previous years.

Moving forward we continue to build on the strengths identified in the survey while addressing areas for improvement. Continuous user feedback will be integral to our ongoing quality assurance and improvement initiatives.

We will use these insights to inform our strategies and ensure that we consistently meet and exceed user expectations.



Feedback has highlighted our strengths in a number of areas:

93%

Timeliness of Results:

An overwhelming 93% of GP service users expressed satisfaction with the time taken to receive results. This high level of satisfaction reflects our commitment to efficient service delivery and timely communication, which are critical aspects of patient care and diagnostic services.

85%

Usefulness of clinical interpretive comments:

The survey revealed that clinical interpretive comments are highly valued by both Trust and GP users. Specifically, 85% of GP users and 100% of Trust users found these comments useful. Additionally, 81% of GP users and 92% of Trust users reported that the comments were easy to understand. This feedback underscores the importance of clear and informative communication in enhancing the utility of pathology reports.

96%

Satisfaction with Test repertoire:

Satisfaction with the range of tests offered was nearly unanimous, with 96% of both Trust and GP users expressing contentment. This indicates that our test repertoire meets the diverse needs of our users, supporting comprehensive diagnostic capabilities.

Ease of contact with clinically qualified staff:

Both Trust and GP users responded positively when asked about their ability to easily contact clinically qualified staff. This accessibility is crucial for addressing queries and providing clarifications, thus ensuring that users can make well-informed decisions based on pathology reports.

Thanks, praise and appreciation our teams have received:

Cellular Pathology team received a letter from the National Cancer Director, NHS England:

Recognising the improvements that had been made in diagnostics of cancers within NWLP.

Clinical Biochemistry by a Consultant Community Paediatrician:

"It makes a big difference to know there are professionals in our network who will go beyond the call of duty to support vulnerable families."

Infection & Immunity Sciences:

"Thank you so much for the excellent service delivered here- we're very grateful for such prompt release of results. It made a big difference to patient management".

Pathology Support services received thanks from Royal Lancaster Infirmary & Furness General Hospital stating:

"Huge thanks for the excellent service and very swift response in sending this results out to us. Please regard this as official positive feedback and a compliment of the service - I understand that Pathology often doesn't get as much feedback as it deserves."

St Mary's Blood Transfusion team:

"The units we organised in advance were rapidly depleted and the BMS managed to get a further large quantity to us very quickly. This patient would have died on table without such rapid action. As ever, we remain indebted to the lab's support."

Andrology team:

Received thanks from a patient for ensuring their procedure went well



West Middlesex Blood Sciences team from the site A&E:

"Thank the pathology team for the efficiency they have shown on this shift. Blood results were returning to us within 30 minutes of samples being sent. I have thanked the team personally but wanted to feedback to you."

Junior doctor mentioned Infection & Immunity Sciences during a ward round saying:

How fantastic it was that they receive fast BDG and GM results here - everywhere he had worked before it was a 2-3 week TAT and really quite meaningless for patient care.

Cellular pathology team from the Imperial Director of Nursing:

"I just wanted to thank you and your team for all the support they gave with the HTA inspection last week. The HTA inspection team were really positive about the team work and collaboration and there were no critical issues identified at the time."

THANK YOU



Customer-Focused Excellence: Pathology Call Centre

At NWLP, we prioritise customer satisfaction and service excellence, continually striving to enhance our offerings to meet the needs of our service users and patients.

The creation of the new Pathology Support Services division is a testament to this commitment, enabling us to bring service improvements across the organisation.

A key area of focus within this division is our Pathology Call Centre. This year, we have significantly invested in the training and development of our call centre team.

By bringing together functions from across the organisation into one central location, we have transformed the call centre into the primary point of contact both internally and externally. The call centre team are now the first point of contact both internally and externally, liaising between service users, our laboratory and clinical teams, pathology IT services and corporate support services.

This consolidation allows for more streamlined and efficient communication, ensuring that our service users receive timely and accurate support. The enhanced capabilities of our Pathology Call Centre demonstrate our unwavering commitment to maintaining high standards and delivering exceptional service.

By focusing on customer satisfaction and operational excellence, NWLP continues to set the benchmark for pathology support services.

Blood Sciences Renin- Aldosterone Service Growth

NWLP is proud to have five Supra-Regional assay service (SAS) centres. SAS are comprised of a group of highly specialist diagnostic laboratories that collaborate to deliver top tier services within their areas of expertise.

Each specialist laboratory's recognised excellence is based on their analytical expertise and a thorough knowledge of the clinical application and interpretation of the tests they provide.

This year, our Mass Spectrometry Aldosterone-Renin centre, one of our SAS, has achieved significant growth. Thanks to capital investment in state-of-the-art mass spectrometers, the unit has expanded its capacity to handle additional activity received from national and international referring centres.

This expansion underscores the quality and reliability of our services, demonstrating our commitment to excellence in diagnostic testing.

By leveraging cutting-edge technology we have enhanced our diagnostic capabilities:

High Sensitivity: Detecting even the smallest levels of hormones for accurate diagnosis.

Specificity: Reducing interference from other substances to ensure reliable results.

Reliability: Investment in new equipment provides us the assurance to meet turnaround times and key performance indicators.

The growth of our Mass Spectrometry Aldosterone-Renin centre is a testament to the quality and reliability of our services. We are excited about the future and the opportunities this growth brings to our department. With increased activity, we are more dedicated than ever to providing high quality diagnostic services to our customers, contributing to better patient outcomes.



PADDINGTON LIFE SCIENCES

Membership of Paddington Life Sciences

NWLP officially joined the prestigious Paddington Life Sciences Partnership group. This partnership marks a significant milestone in our commitment to fostering collaboration, innovation, and growth within the life sciences sector. We look forward to collaborating with fellow members of the Paddington Life Sciences Partnership group to drive positive change and shape the future of healthcare.

Dr Suki Balendra, Director of strategic partnerships for Paddington Life Sciences, said: "North West London Pathology is fantastic example of how services can be strengthened through partnerships. We are really thrilled that NWLP are bringing their expertise and insights into our work with a focus on our data and digital workflow and beyond."

NWLP Inaugural Symposium

This year, NWLP proudly hosted its inaugural symposium, a landmark event that brought together leading experts, practitioners, and stakeholders from NWLP and across the pathology community.

The symposium served as a dynamic platform for sharing cutting-edge research, innovative practices, and the latest advancements in laboratory practice.

Delegates were treated to a series of thought-provoking presentations and interactive sessions that spanned a diverse array of topics, from emerging technologies and diagnostic techniques to quality improvement initiatives and patient-focused outcomes.

The event provided an invaluable opportunity for networking and collaboration, fostering a spirit of camaraderie and shared purpose among participants. Our symposium highlighted the dedication and expertise within NWLP, showcasing our commitment to excellence and continuous learning.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees has set a high standard for future events, and we are excited to build on this success, making the symposium an annual tradition that continues to inspire and drive innovation in laboratory diagnostics.



Industry awards and recognition

We were delighted to be finalists for two HSJ Digital Awards, recognising innovative digital projects transforming care delivery, enhance efficiency, and improve patient outcomes.

We are finalists for Digital Organisation of the Year for our success in creating a unified pathology service through digital transformation. Our LIMS Standardisation and Transformation Programme is a finalist in the Optimising Clinical Pathway through Digital category.

We are honoured for our organisation and our incredibly hard-working staff to be recognised and shortlisted. The number of entries shows the huge levels of innovation and care continually being developed across the UK's healthcare system.

The organisational focus on our people was further celebrated on becoming finalists for the Learning Awards and UK Employee Experience Awards in two categories, Best Employee Experience and Leader of the Year for our Managing Director, Saghar Missaghian-Cully.

Our induction programme is a finalist for the Excellence in People Management Awards in the Best Workforce Transformation / Change Initiative category



Organisational Engagement

Over the past year our executive team members were invited speakers and panellists at numerous events including:

- **Future Forward Leadership Summit** speaking on leadership evolution and requirements to help organisations deliver and become thriving.
- **Pathology Conference** – panel member discussion on future diagnostic delivery and workforce transformation.
- **Histopathology Transformation** event, Saghar was invited by NHSE to the event at Royal College of Pathologists to present insights on our journey.
- **Convenzis Pathology South Conference** - chaired and key note speaker at the event.
- **Female Leadership in Pathology Podcast** - appeared alongside other esteemed guests.



Key Performance Indicators

The Cellular Pathology division, one of the largest in the UK, experienced continued growth in both activity and complexity within its histopathology service during this period.

Despite the challenges posed by increasing demand, the department maintained a performance, with 74% of cases reported within the target 10 day turnaround time.

Recognising the need for continuous improvement, NWLP implemented several innovative initiatives throughout the year to enhance efficiency and quality of service. These actions, while initiated during the reporting period, are expected to yield significant positive impact in the subsequent year.

The department's commitment to excellence is further underscored by its rigorous approach to managing the large volume of case referrals and second opinions, ensuring patients receive the highest standard of care.



KPI 1

A&E blood sciences turn-around times
>95% compliance



KPI 2

Histopathology biopsy reports within 7 calendar days – 60% average



KPI 3

Histopathology and Cytology reports within 10 calendar days – 74% average



KPI 4

Infection & Immunity performance 100% compliant

Our Governance

NWLP is a contractual joint venture between three NHS Trusts- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for the provision of the Pathology Services. The Joint Venture is hosted by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust on behalf of the Owner Trusts.

A signed Consortium Agreement sets out the Joint Venture arrangements between the Owner Trusts, including the hosting and related liability of the Owner Trusts in respect of the Joint Venture; the terms and conditions for the provision of the Pathology Services; and the contractual governance and contractual joint management arrangements of the Joint Venture.

According to the NHS England maturity matrix, NWLP governance meets all the criteria of 'Thriving' classification under the governance domain and across all levels: the Executive Governance Structure, the Clinical Governance, and the Commercial Structure.

NWLP operates with a dedicated executive team accountable to the Owners Committee, which convenes quarterly, facilitating a collaborative approach to executive decision-making and strategic direction for the organisation.

We have an established clinical governance which drives future strategy and innovation, whilst at the same via clinical audits and reviews ensures effectiveness and management of clinical risk.

Our Commercial structure enables effective network operations, assurance and adoption of service development strategies.

Executive Team



Saghar Missaghian-Cully
Managing Director



Dr Corrina Wright
Clinical Director



Angela Jean-Francois
Director of Operations



Allen Widdowson
Finance Director



Matt Connell
Director of Data, Digital and IT



Dawn Morris
Interim People Director

Clinical Director and Clinical Leads



Dr Corrina Wright
Clinical Director



Professor Tricia Tan
Clinical Lead Clinical Biochemistry and Research Director



Professor Mike Osborn
Clinical Lead Cellular Pathology



Dr Sacha Marks
Haematology and Blood Transfusion Clinical Lead



Dr Andrew Godfrey
Haematology and Blood Transfusion Clinical Lead



Professor Kelleher
Clinical Lead for Infection and Immunity

Financial Statements

Positive Activity Growth



Summary Operating Results

The following table summarises the reported operating financial position and the underlying performance of NWLP for the Year to 31 March 2024:

*Underlying investment and expenditure

| | Year to 31/03/2023 | Year to 31/03/2024 | Movement | Year to 31/03/2023 | Year to 31/03/2024 | Movement |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| | £'m | £'m | £'m | £'m | £'m | £'m |
| Income | £134.6 | £129.0 | £5.7 | £143.4 | £134.9 | £8.6 |
| Direct Pay | (£63.9) | (£60.4) | (£3.5) | (£63.9) | (£60.4) | (£3.5) |
| Direct Non Pay | (£50.3) | (£29.3) | (£20.9) | (£50.3) | (£46.6) | (£3.7) |
| Direct Costs | (£114.2) | (£89.7) | (£24.4) | (£114.2) | (£107.0) | (£7.2) |
| Hosting Charges | (£15.0) | (£10.2) | (£4.8) | (£15.0) | (£10.2) | (£4.8) |
| Surplus | £5.4 | £29.1 | (£23.6) | £14.3 | £17.7 | (£3.4) |

*Underlying investment and expenditure adjusts for the impact of non recurring Covid costs and associated funding; and the underlying block contract shortfall for GPDA activity.

Outlook for 2024/2025

Our underlying operating performance has improved year on year driven by a 6.4% growth in underlying income.

We expect our core testing activity will continue to grow both in volume and complexity with demand increasing from our Partner Services, primary care and other NHS as well as Private Customers.

We are planning further investments in our services to meet this demand and continue to deliver and improve our services.

Testing Activity

Throughout 2023/24, our billable testing activity has flourished, we performed 49,891,663 tests resulting in an impressive 6.4% year-on-year increase in underlying income.

General Practitioner (GP) activity surged by 15% compared to the previous year, propelling GP Direct Access growth to over 40% above pre-COVID levels. Partner activity, excluding COVID-related tests, also demonstrated robust growth, increasing by 11% year-on-year.

GP Direct Access (GPDA) Block Funding

Despite another freeze in the GPDA block funding, we have successfully managed the gap between funded and utilised activity, which grew from £5.9 million to £8.8 million during 2023/24.

While this funding challenge diluted our reported results by an additional £2.9 million for the year, it highlights our efficient handling of resources and our resilience in maintaining high levels of service.

Key Service Investments in 2023/24

Our commitment to excellence has driven significant investments in key areas, resulting in increased operating costs but also in substantial service improvements:

Rapid Molecular Laboratories:

We have successfully established and embedded permanent rapid molecular laboratories, enabling near-patient testing for COVID-19, flu, and other respiratory illnesses. This consolidation has also bolstered our support for Emergency Department (ED) testing for blood-borne viruses.

Digital Histopathology Capability:

By enhancing our digital capabilities for histopathology, we have paved the way to significantly improving our reporting speed and flexibility, ensuring faster and more accurate diagnoses.

Staff Investments:

Our strategic investments in laboratory and consultant staff have begun to yield positive results, supporting improvements in cancer turnaround times and stabilising the Infection & Immunity service rota improving health and wellbeing and service delivery.

These positive developments and strategic investments underscore our dedication to enhancing service quality and patient outcomes. We are proud of our progress and remain committed to driving further growth and innovation in the future.

Medical Consultants:

We have planned for a significant investment (£1.8m) in our Medical Consultant team, which will ensure that we have the clinical resilience to continue delivering growth for an increasingly complex service.

Changing National Guidance:

We are responding to changes in National Guidance on testing criteria and investing early in service improvements which will enable us to meet these requirements.

Service Investment:

Our Electron Microscopy service is in high demand and we are investing in excess of £1.0m in new equipment and people to meet the growing demand from the NHS market and beyond.

Service Support:

We are investing further in our Corporate Support for our services. With additional investment in IT, Quality, Change Management as well as Training and development to ensure a continued robust service and support our operations in transition to digital services.

Developments in Partner Contributions

This year, we've seen some changes in our partner contributions linked the demand on the laboratory diagnostic provision of NWLP:

Increased Service Utilisation:

There has been a remarkable £12.7 million increase in service utilisation by our Partners. This reflects the growing demand and the key role the laboratories play in diagnostics with trust and reliance on NWLP's high-quality services, highlighting our vital role in supporting their needs.

Balancing Surplus and Host Charges:

While there was a £3.4 million reduction in the share of surplus, this was offset by an increase in Host Service Charges. This balancing act underscores our adaptability and commitment to maintaining robust partnerships.

Despite a year-on-year increase of £11.3 million in underlying partner contributions, these figures demonstrate our continued growth and the expanding scope of our services.

The increased utilisation by Partners and the adjustments in financial contributions illustrate our dynamic and responsive approach to meeting the evolving needs of our stakeholders.

We are excited about these positive trends and remain dedicated to enhancing our collaboration with Partners, ensuring mutual growth and success in the years to come.

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