

A photograph of an elderly Black woman with short curly hair, wearing glasses and a light blue hospital gown, lying in a hospital bed. She is looking out a window with her hands clasped. The room is brightly lit with natural light from the window.

## Case study

# Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust improves patient care with ICE OpenNet

## Customer profile

- 600 Hospital beds
- Pathology Centre of Excellence
- 4,200 Staff
- Connecting 9 Trusts

### Challenge

The need for a fully interoperable network to share comprehensive patient reports quickly and securely internally and between regional trusts and GPs across the North East.

### Outcomes

With ICE OpenNet, clinicians are assured that complete patient laboratory data is being shared. NHS Trusts using ICE OpenNet can be confident they are providing patients with the highest quality patient-centric care.

## Treating patients more efficiently:

“ICE OpenNet allows me to treat my patients more efficiently. It regularly saves patients unnecessary visits for blood tests as we can check for recent results regardless of where they were performed. Clinical teams save precious time – no longer needing to contact neighbouring providers for recent investigation results. This can avoid wasting appointments where the outcome can be determined by otherwise unavailable tests and avoids duplicate tests that may be inappropriate or even harmful to patients.

It would be really hard to live without this invaluable cross-site resource.”

Mr Paul O’Loughlin MBBS FRCS, Colorectal Consultant, Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust



## Multi-hospital access with CliniSys ICE improves patient care

**Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust (QE Gates-head), one of the first foundation trusts in England, has received national awards for excellence in clinical care and quality.**

It operates the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Blaydon urgent care centre and Bensham Hospital, all within Gateshead. In addition to a full range of local hospital services, the Trust provides valuable breast screening services for Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and parts of Durham – and we are the North Eastern hub for the National Bowel Cancer and AAA Screening Programmes, covering a population of around seven million people.

- Employs more than 4,200 people
- Provides 600 hospital beds across Gateshead.
- Consistently rated as band six – the best possible score – by the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Pathology centre of excellence provides services across Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside
- Cervical screening programme hub for the North East and Yorkshire area using Human Papillomavirus (HPV) testing as the primary screening test. Approximately 540,000 cervical screening requests ordered from practices across the North East and Yorkshire area using ICE



### The challenge:

#### Creating efficiencies via patient report sharing

For years, clinicians logged into multiple systems — each with a separate pass-word — to access lab results for their patients. However, complete patient test results stored in disparate systems were not always accessible. Without efficient, timely communication, there was an increased potential for test duplication, incomplete information and human error.

In addition to problems within the Trust, the issues extended to outside hospitals and GPs needing patient data. In some cases, it might take days to reach the patient's other care providers — potentially resulting in delayed or less informed clinical decisions.

To create efficiency, QE Gateshead needed a fully interoperable network to share comprehensive patient reports quickly and securely internally and between regional trusts and GPs across the North East.

**“The feedback we’ve had from users is that they love ICE OpenNet. It gives them the ability to track patients and they know if a patient has been in the emergency department in our Trust, for example. Also, now they can tell if the patient has an outpatient appointment in a neighbouring trust. Certainly, the general practitioner community speaks volumes about ICE, but so do the clinicians within the Trust. I haven’t found anyone yet who doesn’t like it.”**

Andrew Sanderson, South of Tyne & Wear Pathology  
IM&T Manager



## The solution:

### Rolling out a truly Integrated Clinical Environment

QE Gateshead has been using ICE OpenNet since 2008 and connects nine northern trusts including Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumbria, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham, North Cumbria, North Tees and South Tees. Today, ICE OpenNet enables web connectivity to multiple diverse systems, giving clinicians seamless access to a consolidated view of patients' diagnostic test results from all organisations. They simply use their own ICE system to pull patient reports from other trusts and providers using ICE OpenNet.

ICE OpenNet saves administrative time calling labs, reduces waiting times and prevents waste at the expense of the trusts and patients. ICE OpenNet provides clinicians with an enhanced picture of the patient's diagnostic journey and allows the GP to see a consolidated view of results for the patient from all visited sites. By removing "islands of data" previously inaccessible to the clinician, ICE OpenNet gives greater access to results to help the clinician treat the patient.

## Outcomes:

### Benefits for clinicians

ICE OpenNet closed the loop and created a "virtual laboratory" — rather than fragmented silos of data. Today, patients in Gateshead can go for an outpatient visit at a neighbouring trust and GPs can review lab results even before they receive the clinical letters coming back from the appointment.

This increased efficiency enables greater responsiveness to patients' needs. For example, a local clinician can quickly check the Haemoglobin levels of a cancer patient receiving chemotherapy. If the levels are too low, the provider can inform the patient and save them a long trip to the cancer treatment centre.

With ICE OpenNet, clinicians are assured that complete patient lab data is being shared. NHS Trusts using ICE OpenNet can be confident they are providing patients with the highest quality patient-centric care. Additionally, ICE OpenNet supports Legitimate Relationships and meets UK, Department of Health and Caldicott Confidentiality requirements.

**"As a clinician, OpenNet has repeatedly proved invaluable in managing my patients. Whilst we can easily see results from our local unit who use the same ICE instance, without OpenNet I would be unable to quickly and easily access radiology and blood results, which would result in delays to patient care and wasted resources from repeating investigations unnecessarily"**

Dr Jonathan Harness MBBS MRCGP MFCI, Chief Clinical Information Officer Newcastle Gateshead CCG.