



Black Country Pathology Services deploys WinPath Enterprise to realise its vision of a 'world network' laboratory

Case Study

THE CHALLENGE

Black Country Pathology Services (BCPS) runs a state-of-the-art pathology hub in Wolverhampton and four essential services laboratories. In 2018, it chose the CliniSys WinPath Enterprise LIMS to improve communication, standardise working practices, and deliver efficiency and quality benefits.

THE OUTCOMES

WinPath Enterprise is now live at the hub and the ESL in Walsall, where BCPS operational manager Graham Danks says it is delivering more benefits than expected thanks to its close integration with testing equipment and medical records.

Lord Carter of Coles praised BCPS as "world class" when he visited the network and saw the LIMS in action. Danks says networks must pick the right IT partner

CUSTOMER PROFILE

- ⓘ 22 million tests per year
- ⚒ 4 partnering NHS Trusts
- ⚙ ICE serves 1,000 GPs
- ⌂ Population on 1.5 million

WinPath Enterprise realises Lord Carter's vision for network pathology service at BCPS

"Black Country Pathology Services (BCPS) has used the Carter Report as our model, and we have done the whole thing: the building, the staff, the IT, the equipment. We chose CliniSys WinPath Enterprise, and our original plan was a big bang go live at the hub; but then things changed. During the pandemic we adapted our approach to keep moving forward. The LIMS has enabled us to do what we wanted to do. It has enabled our hub and spoke model of working and delivered savings. It is a roller coaster journey. You just have to hold on, and do it, and plan, plan, plan. But we have done it, and we have done it in a clinically safe way." **BCPS operational manager Graham Danks.**

Black Country Pathology Services: one hub, four spokes, 22 million tests a year

Black Country Pathology Services (BCPS) is part of a major, national initiative to reorganise pathology services in England.

Following a landmark report by Lord Carter of Coles, NHS Improvement instituted a programme to create 29 pathology networks to consolidate labs and standardise working practices.

The aims of the programme are to make best use of scarce staff and resources, to improve efficiency and quality, and to make sure pathology can respond to the changing needs of the NHS while offering the latest tests and services.

BCPS was set up in 2018 to further these aims for its four partner trusts: The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust. It also serves 1,000 GPs.

It operates a central hub at New Cross Hospital, part of The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and four essential services labs at acute hospitals in Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, and Walsall. The network is deploying CliniSys WinPath Enterprise at all five labs and all pathology disciplines.

In total, BCPS conducts 22 million tests per year for a core population of 1.5 million people; and it does so in a way that was described as “world class” by Lord Carter, when he visited the hub in 2021.

The challenge

Putting a LIMS at the centre of a network

Black Country Pathology Services (BCPS) has taken the lessons of Lord Carter's report to heart as it has developed its network and operating model.

To create the most efficient, highest quality service possible, it has designed and executed an extension to its state-of-the-art pathology building at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton, to enable it to handle a much larger volume of samples.

It has also invested in a single laboratory information system and plans to buy completely new equipment for the hub and its four essential services laboratories.

Operational manager Graham Danks says: "The Carter Report has been our model, and we have done the whole thing: the staff, the building, the IT, the equipment.

"The IT and the equipment are essential, because we want to build a virtual laboratory, so staff can go from Lab A to Lab B and see no difference in terms of the systems and equipment they use and the processes they follow to do things."

In autumn 2018, BCPS decided to go with CliniSys as the provider of its single LIMS. It opted to take WinPath Enterprise as a hosted solution and deployed a wide area network to create the fast links needed for constant uptime and rapid access.

At the same time, it started to prepare for deployment, by drawing up a single Black Country catalogue for tests and services, coded using the national standard, SNOMED CT, and agreeing harmonised working processes with the different pathology disciplines.

"We put people in a room and gave them tea and biscuits and told them they couldn't come out until they agreed," Graham jokes. "However, it is an essential step. You standardise your working processes and then you execute them through the LIMS."

The network planned for a 'big bang' go-live for WinPath Enterprise at the hub in Wolverhampton. But two things happened that forced a change of plan and a focus on its cellular pathology and microbiology services.

First, BCPS won a major contract for human papilloma virus screening, as part of a national roll-out of HPV-first cervical cancer screening. And then the novel coronavirus arrived in the UK.



"Running a pathology service during the pandemic felt like being amid the muck and bullets of a war zone - physically and emotionally draining. However, the legacy will be a very robust service going forward - and a laboratory network that knows how to work as a team." Graham Danks talks to [The Pathologist](#) in February 2021.

Graham Danks, Black Country Pathology Service Operational Manager



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The Solution

Delivering in adversity: Two years of Covid go-lives

Black Country Pathology Services (BCPS) was planning a big-bang go-live for CliniSys WinPath Enterprise when winning a HPV testing contract and the arrival of Covid-19 forced a rethink.

Nick Fudger, senior ICT programme manager, says that to take up the HPV contract, the network had to build new testing facilities, TUPE-transfer in staff from the former contract holders, and link-in more than 1,000 sites doing point of care testing.

All of which made the implementation of the LIMS in cellular pathology a priority. Nick says: "In the end, we went live with CellPath a year and a day after contract sign.

"That was at the hub [in Wolverhampton], closely followed by [the essential services lab in] Walsall."

Just a few weeks later, the outbreak of the pandemic focused attention on microbiology. Nick says it became imperative to consolidate microbiology services at Wolverhampton and Walsall, because they had high-throughput Covid-19 test analysers, so they became the next priority for go-live.

With the UK in lockdown, the implementation programme adopted a remote working model and talked to CliniSys about a remote approach to user acceptance testing. In the face of considerable adversity, this delivered a second go-live in June.

"We made the new model work," says Nick. "We went live with microbiology and shortly after that we went live with the whole of blood sciences. It was a notable achievement, and one that we have been able to build on, subsequently."

Go-lives completed and planned

Live

- ↗ Hub, cellular pathology, 17 September 2019
- ↗ Wolverhampton, cellular pathology, 19 November 2019
- ↗ Hub, microbiology, 14 July 2020
- ↗ Hub, blood sciences, 29 September 2020
- ↗ Wolverhampton, microbiology 3 December 2020
- ↗ Dudley, cellular pathology, 4 May 2021
- ↗ Birmingham and Solihull GP microbiology, 29 September 2021
- ↗ Birmingham and Solihull microbiology and blood transfusion, 16 November 2021.

Planned

- ↗ Dudley, all disciplines, June 2022
- ↗ Birmingham and Solihull, final, September 2022

"From the outset, we have recognised that a single LIMS is essential to support communication, standardisation and harmonisation across our network. Our close working relationship with CliniSys enabled us to progress our plans during Covid-19, while focusing on microbiology and what was important to them." Nick Fudger delivers an update on progress in a CliniSys press release, September 2020.

Nick Fudger, Senior ICT Programme Manager



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