

CliniSys to provide single laboratory information system for Northern Ireland

Leading pathology IT supplier to deploy WinPath Enterprise to five trusts, the blood transfusion service and GLIMS Genomics to the national genetics service in Belfast

This significant investment will underpin the modernisation and reform of pathology services in Northern Ireland and enable future innovation

CliniSys has won a major contract to deploy a single laboratory information system across Northern Ireland as part of a modernisation programme to create a world-class pathology service for the country.

CliniSys will replace the seven IT systems used by Northern Ireland's hospital trusts' pathology disciplines and the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion service with the latest version of WinPath Enterprise.

In addition, CliniSys will also replace the legacy system used by the country's genetics service with GLIMS Genomics which has been designed to meet the needs of genomics laboratories and successfully deployed across mainland Europe.

Northern Ireland's Health Minister Robin Swann said: "Pathology is a service that operates largely behind the scenes but which is critical to our health service and contributes to the vast majority of patient diagnoses from GPs and hospitals. In labs across the region, more than 40 million tests a year are being carried out by our scientists and laboratory staff, to support the healthcare needs of our population.

"The past 18 months have been particularly challenging, with the pandemic placing unprecedented demands on our testing service and reinforcing the need for investment and transformation of our Health and Social Care system, to meet the needs of our citizens in coming years. I believe that a world class digital healthcare service is at the heart of our future needs, and the launch of LIMS is a shining example of transformation being delivered."

Karin Jackson, who leads the Core LIMS project in the NIPIMS (The Northern Ireland Pathology Information Management Systems) programme, said: "Today is excellent news for our health service, and pathology services in particular. It sees us beginning to implement a regional solution that will take us from seven separate systems to a single, Northern Ireland healthcare specific, digital solution. This will enable us to better manage increasing demand, standardise reporting across the health service and ensure a better service for patients."

Jennifer Welsh, senior responsible owner of NIPIMS and chair of the Northern Ireland Pathology Network, said: "The decision to award a single LIMS contract is a big moment in the development of pathology services in Northern Ireland.

"This Regional LIMS solution will generate accurate, real-time information to enable laboratories to benchmark their performance and deliver new insights into the conditions for which tests are being run. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has shown how important it is to be able to pick up and track infections in the community."

Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Board has been working with PathNetNI on a programme to modernise pathology services for the past five years.

A consultation in 2016 noted that laboratory tests are already involved in 70-80% of diagnoses, and that demand will grow as health and social care services respond to the needs of an ageing population, advances in cancer medicine, and the spread of genetic testing and precision medicine.

However, it concluded that pathology services in Northern Ireland would face significant challenges in meeting these demands without investment and reform.

The consultation concluded with proposals that are now being implemented to create a single, integrated management structure for laboratories in Northern Ireland, to split 'hot' from 'cold' work, and to invest in a single LIMS and digital pathology.

CliniSys won the single LIMS contract following an open tender process run by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) on behalf of Health and Social Care Northern Ireland. CliniSys' 30 years' experience and proven ability to develop and deploy fully networked multi-sited LIMS solutions was a deciding factor.

Karen Bailey, interim chief executive of the BSO, said: "A new LIMS is critical to the modernisation and transformation of pathology in Northern Ireland. The tender emphasised that we were looking for a system that could support standardised models of working and embed best practice, while reducing training requirements and delivering a great user experience.

"It also underlined that we wanted a system that could deliver a sustainable flow of real-time information to dashboards, so it could be accessed by everybody who might need it.

"The choice of WinPath Enterprise means Northern Ireland's laboratories will benefit from a single LIMS that has been designed with the needs of modern, pathology networks constantly in mind. We look forward to seeing it rolled-out and to the deployment of GLIMS Genomics."

The single LIMS will support the laboratories at Northern Ireland's five acute trusts and the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service. Collectively, they employ 1,100 people, who carry out more than 40 million tests a year, to support health and care services for 1.8 million people, living across an area of 14,000 square kilometres.

CliniSys will work with digital and pathology experts to develop an effective design and implementation model to deliver at this scale. A single design authority will be set up to configure the system, with representatives from all five trusts and all pathology disciplines.

CliniSys' deployment team will support the first go-live, which is planned for Belfast Trust in around 18-months. The company will then transfer skills to local digital teams so they can support subsequent go-lives.

CliniSys will also make sure that WinPath Enterprise and GLIMS Genomics can provide data feeds to more than 70 other systems and that they are fully integrated with the core systems that clinicians use. This will include integration with the Epic electronic patient record that Northern Ireland chose in 2020.

CliniSys chief executive Richard Craven said: "This is a big and exciting project. It is a national deployment for WinPath Enterprise and the first UK deployment of GLIMS Genomics.

"We are honoured that CliniSys has been trusted to deliver technology that is vital to the smooth-running of Northern Ireland's laboratories and its public health and healthcare systems. We are also

honoured that we are being trusted to play such a big part in the modernisation, transformation and innovation agenda.

“This is a ten-year contract, so we are in this for the long-term. We are now looking forward to working with Health and Social Care Northern Ireland, PathNetNI, individual laboratories and pathologists on the implementation and to helping them to shape the future of diagnostic services across Northern Ireland.”

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About CliniSys Group

CliniSys Group is the market-leading provider of Order Communications software and Laboratory Information Management in the UK and Europe.

CliniSys Group has been helping healthcare professionals test, diagnose and treat millions of patients every day, saving or improving quality of life for over 30 years. We are a trusted partner to hospitals and private healthcare organisations across Europe and routinely provide reliable, intuitive diagnostics solutions.

Our scalable end-to-end solutions cover diagnostics workflow as well as electronic order entry and result consultation. Our Laboratory Information Systems are used in more than 1,000 laboratories, by over 25,000 people across 20 countries in 10 languages, increasing the efficiency in the lab. Our order communications and results reporting systems, process more than 40 million patients every year ensuring ordering of exams and results reporting for radiology, cardiology, genomics and all pathology disciplines are transparent, secure and seamless.

We have one of the largest specialist healthcare IT teams across Europe and have built an unrivalled reputation for the deployment of solutions for complex diagnostics networks. With half of our 500-strong team based in the UK, and half based across our local offices in Belgium, France, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands, we are the only vendor repeatably delivering end to end – at scale.

About NIPIMS

The Northern Ireland Pathology Information Management Systems programme (NIPIMS)

The Northern Ireland Pathology Information Management System (NIPIMS) programme is a programme to combine the seven regional information applications used within HSC Pathology onto a single, regional platform.

The NIPIMS Programme consists of both the Core LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) Project and the BPAT (Blood Production & Tracking) project.

Web: [NIPIMS \(hscni.net\)](http://NIPIMS(hscni.net)) Twitter: @NIPIMS