

Where are your pathology **RESULTS?**

54% of Clinicians stated that reports for pathology test results are not always available when needed, and 38% of Clinicians stated that urgent abnormal pathology results do not always reach the right person.



The Healthcare Commission Report 'Getting results: pathology services in acute and specialist trusts' stated that in a survey of 5,500 Clinicians only:

- 46% of respondents agreed with the statement that 'Pathology results and reports are always available when [we] need them'.
- 62% of respondents agreed with the statement that 'Important [urgent or abnormal] pathology results always reached the right person'.

These numbers are significant

The report identified that Pathology is the largest of the diagnostic services by:

- The numbers of requests that it meets annually (175 million).
- Expenditure (5% of the total budgets of NHS Trusts).
- The proportion of clinical decisions that it affects (reputedly between 70% and 80%).

However, in conclusion the report stated that 'the managers of pathology services must be applauded for managing to maintain and improve services in the face of increasing demand, but the day-to-day pressures may have left them with less time to rationalise services between trusts on a wider scale.'

Recommendations in the report included use of electronic requesting and improving electronic access to previous test results, to facilitate elimination of duplicate tests.

Barriers to change

Barriers to change which were identified in the Lord Carter of Coles Report included:

- Disparate IT systems running on different platforms and technologies, make it difficult to extract data and information which could:
 - i Result in patient care being compromised.
 - ii Have a negative impact on system support and higher support cost implications.
- Quality of requests and samples are variable.

The Healthcare Commission Report stated that:

- 30% of requests lacked a time or date, hindering monitoring the quality of the service.
- The name of the referring consultant or GP was missing on 9% of requests from wards and 7% of requests from GPs, making it more difficult for the pathology service to contact the referring clinician to discuss abnormal results.

What can be done to overcome these barriers?

Implement modern integrated common IT systems (with common data standards and consistent data handling) across the care setting, e.g. a Care Record System, Order Communications and Pathology, and:

- Provide access to systems across care settings.
- Use the IT systems as an enabler to manage the service more effectively and provide the complete care record to users to assist with reducing inappropriate/duplicate test requests.

Fujitsu has been working with a number of NHS Trusts to understand the main drivers for change. These include:

Drivers for Clinicians

- Access to all patient data in one place when required.
- Clear tracking of the progress of patients' test requests.
- Easy availability of the complete history of tests for each patient, which is also clearly presented.
- Improving the management of clinical risk.

DATASHEET PATHOLOGY

Drivers for the Trust/Pathology Department

- Protecting the income and maintaining/increasing demand, by delivering an efficient and effective service to all users of the service.
- Improving the management of the laboratory workload with the available resources.
- Controlling costs by having better information on the costs per test, and per patient.
- Providing a single development path for IT systems.

Table 1 indicates a number of the improvements recommended by (1) Getting results: pathology services in acute and specialist trusts' and (2) the Lord Carter of Coles Report. This is mapped in terms of degree of change and the typical time it takes to implement.

Degree of change	Radical Process Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardise which tests are performed when certain profiles are requested. 	Transformation (long-term) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed Pathology Networks. • All the information in one place, due to 'end-to-end IT connectivity'. • Ensure that demand is appropriate by comparing geographical differences for requests (using integrated reporting and analysis tools within modern pathology systems). • Give service users more feedback on the quality and completeness of requests.
	Step Change Process Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy common integrated IT systems across the care setting (enabler). • Harmonise IT and data coding to facilitate exchange of information across managed networks. • Set local protocols for which tests are performed and give service users access to this information. 	Process Improvements (long-term) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set time targets for routine tests, capture and measure performance. • Measure and manage demand by number of tests requested and associated costs. • Improved control of bed management (due to earlier patient discharge based on earlier availability of test results and improved management of infection control).
	Short-term	Long-term

How can Fujitsu Services help and how will this benefit your organisation?

The Fujitsu pathology solution (*Cerner Millennium*[®] PathNet) provides many potential benefits for organisations looking to replace their laboratory systems. It is fully integrated with the Fujitsu Local Service Provider (LSP) offerings for Electronic Care Record and Order Communications.

Benefits can be categorised under the headings of:

- Strategic – e.g. support for the development of Pathology networks; support for point of care testing, by linking to point of care testing equipment and devices; and reporting to identify hospital acquired infections.
- Reduced clinical risk – e.g. one view of the patient history and ability to perform trend analysis and alerts.
- Cash releasing – e.g. improved standardisation of tests performed (set up Trust definable 'decision support' rules for which tests are appropriate in a given context), thereby reducing the incidence of inappropriate requests made or tests performed.
- Time – e.g. a reduction in duplicate data entry by GPs, wards and the laboratory.

- Process/staff/clinician efficiencies – e.g. faster access to results will potentially reduce the average length of stay for patients.
- IT Development strategy – e.g. providing a coherent development path for integrated software across the Care Record, Order Communications and Pathology systems.

Additionally, Fujitsu Services can help your organisation with business case definition and re-designing your business processes to gain full advantage from the technology, e.g. using techniques such as 'Lean Thinking' and Six Sigma. The Lord Carter of Coles Report states that these techniques have been adopted in some Pathology departments with great success.

The PathNet solution has an excellent track record

It has been deployed as a lab solution for 26 years, with 142 live clients over 300 sites worldwide (including one in England, live since 2002), spanning all pathology areas. Five Trusts in the Southern Programme for IT have now ordered the solution from Fujitsu.

System development, support and availability

Support and development for the product is secured. The Fujitsu LSP contract runs until 2014, thus ensuring development and support for the product at least until then. The managed service contract has clear responsibilities for system performance and availability, letting Trusts concentrate on delivering patient care.

About Fujitsu Services, NHS Account

Formed to address the needs of the NHS in relation to its 'National Programme for IT', Fujitsu Services, NHS Account brings together Healthcare, IT, Change and Programme Management expertise drawn from Fujitsu Services Limited (as prime contractor), TATA Consultancy Services, Cerner Corporation, sub-contractors and licensors.

About Fujitsu Services

Fujitsu Services is a leading European information technology services company. Its business is helping its customers realise the value of information technology through the application of consulting, systems integration and managed service contracts. It serves customers in the private and public sectors across Europe including retail, financial services, healthcare and government. With an annual turnover of £2.46 billion (€3.59 billion), it employs over 19,000 people across 20 countries. Headquartered in London, Fujitsu Services is the European IT services arm of the US\$43.2 billion (€32.5 billion) Fujitsu Group.

References

The Healthcare Commission Report (2007) *Getting results: pathology services in acute and specialist trusts*.
Lord Carter of Coles (2006) *Review of the NHS Pathology Services in England*.

ASK FUJITSU

Contact us on +44 (0)870 242 7998 or askfujitsu@uk.fujitsu.com or visit uk.fujitsu.com

REF: 2579

Fujitsu Services Limited, Registered in England no 96056, Registered Office: 22 Baker Street, London, W1U 3BW
Copyright © Fujitsu Services Limited 2007. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form without the prior written permission of Fujitsu Services Ltd. Fujitsu Services endeavours to ensure that the information in this document is correct and fairly stated, but does not accept liability for any errors or omissions.