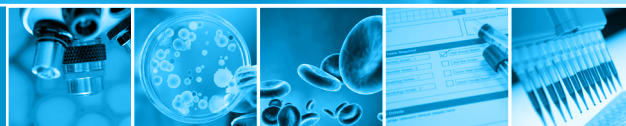


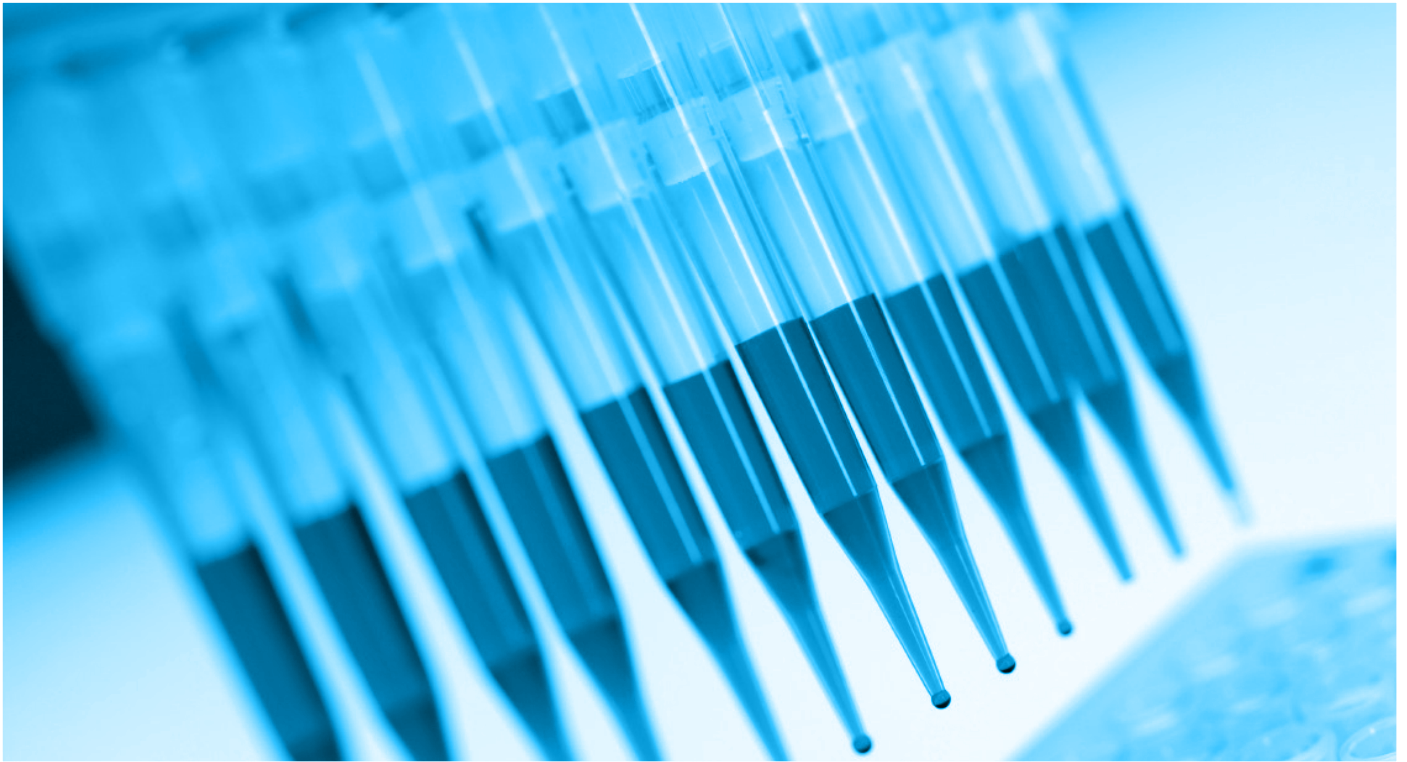


Information for patients



Improving NHS pathology services in the East of England





Have your say

Often, when you go to your doctor for a check-up or because you're feeling unwell, your doctor will arrange for tests to be taken to establish the state of your health or the exact nature of your illness. While the doctor or nurse may take samples for testing, the tests themselves will be analysed or overseen by pathologists as part of a pathology service.

Common tests involve providing urine, blood or tissue samples. Once the laboratory receives the samples, the pathology service will analyse them and forward their findings to your doctor. As well as determining the cause of illness, later tests can see how well you are responding to treatment.

How these tests are carried out and analysed is likely to change. It is important that you have your say now so that your needs can be taken into consideration as the new arrangements are being drafted. These changes will in no way affect your doctor's ability to request the tests in the first place. The focus will be on how it can be made easier to collect the samples from you and analyse them quickly and accurately so that the results are available as soon as possible for your doctor to make a quick decision.

If you live in the east of England, would you, please, complete our short questionnaire? It will only take a few moments to complete. **This can be done online at:**
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DCDND3W>.

Alternatively, you are welcome to complete the paper version of this questionnaire, which should be attached. If it has become separated and you would like a copy posting to you, please call the Strategic Projects Team on freephone 0800 923 3001. You can return your questionnaire, freepost.

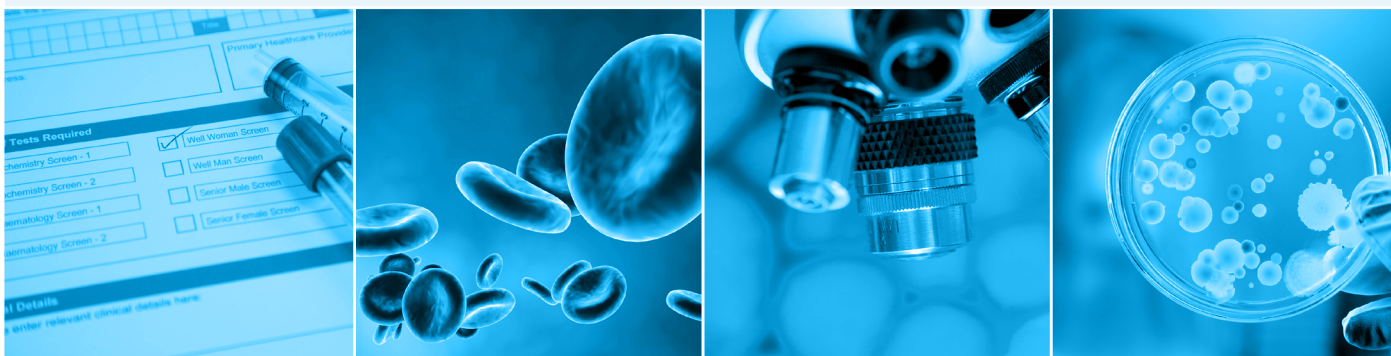
Background

Two national reviews have been undertaken in recent years to establish how well pathology services are managing. The most recent review, the Carter report published in December 2008, found that:

- Combining smaller pathology centres into fewer, larger ones could improve the speed and quality of test results.
- Combining centres would also save the NHS money by being more cost effective, partly by making use of more automated processes.
- Grouping pathology staff together would help more collaborative working and enable them to share their expertise.

Around 70% of visits the GP result in a blood or other test being taken, and in 2009-10, an estimated 80m tests were carried out, of which approximately 40m were requested by GPs, and about £205m was spent on pathology in the east of England. A further review has found that proposed changes could reduce costs by 20%, which equates to over £40m across the region. This is money that might be put to other use in patient services.

The Strategic Projects Team (part of NHS East of England) has been working with the organisations which provide and commission these services and the doctors who use them to develop plans to put these recommendations into action.



What will this mean for patients?

Patients will continue to receive pathology services prescribed through their doctor.

Some planned improvements might include:

- Improved access to blood taking services (phlebotomy).
- Greater accuracy of results and faster response times for tests.
- Different ways to accessing your test results for those involved in your care and potentially by you.
- Easier access to advice for doctors on the tests available and interpretation of results and earlier availability of new tests.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will it take longer to get my blood test results back?

The aim of the transforming pathology project is to improve the provision of pathology services, with patients' experiences clearly an important priority, including the response times for tests.

Will I still be able to get my blood test done at my GP surgery?

While the work is still being done, patients' access to testing, including where tests are taken, will at least remain the same, and may well improve.

Why change things if they are working as they are?

Particularly with current financial pressures, all public services have a responsibility to ensure that they are doing their best with tax payer's money and to change things if better value (without compromise to quality) can be obtained. Also, new developments and procedures in health care mean that services need to change and adapt over time to ensure best practice.

Why talk to patients now when some decisions have already been made?

Many factors to be considered are of a technical nature and the professionals with relevant expertise and knowledge have needed to be involved early. No final decisions have been made and now that we know how these technical issues need to be addressed we want to ensure that the end result is right for patients using the service.

Will this mean the loss of local facilities?

There are no plans to close pathology laboratories used. Each hospital will decide about the laboratory services that are important to retain within their hospital for tests that the hospital requests. Your local hospital will make sure that emergency and urgent services continue to be supported by pathology services and are delivered at the required standard.

Are services being taken over by the private sector?

The review will show what the model of high quality future services will look like. It is intended that NHS providers of pathology services will meet the standards. Where those standards cannot be met, as with all other services in future, other options may need to be considered. This may include consideration of independent sector providers or partnerships

Where can I find out more information about the changes happening in pathology services?

Visit the Strategic Projects Team website at: www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects and follow the pathology tab on the left hand side.

Tell us about your experiences of pathology services

Often, when you go to your doctor for a check-up or because you're feeling unwell, your doctor will arrange for tests to be taken to establish the state of your health or the exact nature of your illness. While the doctor or nurse may take samples for testing, the tests themselves will be analysed or overseen by pathologists as part of a pathology service.

Common tests involve providing urine, blood, smear or tissue samples. Once the laboratory receives the samples, the pathology service will analyse them and forward their findings to your doctor. As well as determining the cause of illness, later tests can see how well you are responding to treatment.

How these tests are carried out and analysed is likely to change as pathology services are reviewed in the east of England. It is important that you have your say now so that your needs can be taken into consideration as the new arrangements are being drafted. These changes will in no way affect your doctor's ability to request the tests in the first place. It will focus on how it can be made easier to collect the samples from you and analyse them quickly and accurately so your doctor can make a quick decision.

If you live in the east of England, please complete this short questionnaire, sharing your experiences of having tests taken and the results given back to you. This survey takes only a few minutes to complete. Please note that the earlier questions focus on your experiences of having tests taken, and are followed by questions concerning how you receive your results. There is also a comments box, if you have any other points that you think should be considered.

Please respond by Friday 13 May 2011 using the freepost return address on the back of this leaflet. Your answers will be kept confidential. **This survey can also be completed online** at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DCDND3W>. Thank you for your time and thoughts.

Dr Hemal Desai MRCGP

Transforming Pathology Lead and Clinical Advisor
to the Strategic Projects Team, NHS East of England

Having tests taken

1. When did you last have a test taken at your GP surgery?

- Less than a year ago
- Between one and three years ago
- Longer than three years ago

2. If your last test was less than a year ago, how many tests have you had at your GP surgery within the last year?

- 1
- 2 - 4
- 5 - 10
- More than 10

3. Please describe your most recent experience of having tests taken, especially blood tests:

4. If you could change anything about how your tests are currently taken, please tell us what would that be

5. Overall, how do you rate your experiences of having tests taken on a scale of one to five (with five being most satisfied)?

- 1 2 3 4 5

6. Please could you explain why you gave the answer to the question above:

Receiving test results

7. How do you usually get your test results?
(please tick just one answer)

- I go to see my GP
 I see someone else at my surgery
 I call the surgery
 The surgery calls me if there's anything I need to know about my test results
 I go to the hospital
 Other (please specify)

8. Please describe your most recent experience of receiving test results:

9. If you could change anything about how you receive your test results, what would that be?

10. Overall, how do you rate your experiences of receiving test results on a scale of one to five (with five being most satisfied)?

- 1 2 3 4 5

11. Please could you explain why you gave the answer to the question above:

12. Would you consider collecting your test results from somewhere other than your surgery (eg: an appropriate high street outlet)? Think about if anywhere might be more convenient and what supporting info you may require with the result.

- I would consider it
 I might consider it
 I wouldn't consider it

13. Please could you explain why you gave the answer to the question above:

14. Would you consider accessing your test results online? (there would be any necessary advice from your GP included with the results)

- I would consider it
 I might consider it
 I wouldn't consider it

15. Please use this space for any comments or suggestions you would like to add about your experiences of pathology services:

16. Do you know which Primary Care Trust (PCT) region your GP practice is in? If so, please enter it below.

17. Please tell us the location of your GP practice (we will not share responses with GP practices).

City/Town:

County:

18. It may be helpful in the future if we could contact you for further comments. Please let us have your contact details if you are happy for us to do this (you are welcome to just give us your email address, if you wish). We will not pass your details on to anyone else.

Name:

Address 1:

Address 2:

City/Town:

County:

Post Code:

Email:

19. Would you like to be kept up to date via email with progress in the Transforming Pathology Services project? If so please complete your email address above. Thank you.

- Yes No

Thank you for taking the time to respond.

Return to:

Strategic Projects Team, NHS East of England, Victoria House, Freepost, RRLU-YTGH-RZYL Capital Park, Fulbourn CB21 5XB

Further Information:

Freephone: 0800 923 3001

Email: transforming.pathology@eoe.nhs.uk

Web: www.eoe.nhs.uk/strategicprojects