

## **Black Country Pathology Services and CliniSys use tech to link non-connected care**

*Web-based system developed to give care homes simple access to Covid-19 tests*

*Partnership working will see portal developed to give more health and care services paper-free access to laboratories*

Black Country Pathology Services has worked with CliniSys to create the ICE Portal, a web-based application that makes it easy for care homes, or other community care settings, to be able to order lab based Covid-19 tests and see the results.

The pathology network has also drawn up plans with the company to continue development work on the ICE Portal, so it is ready for future health emergencies and can be used by other health and care services that need to order tests but can't use existing networks and IT systems.

Programme manager Manx Baker explained: "When the pandemic arrived, it soon became apparent that pathology services across the country were not set-up to test people who are being cared for outside our family of NHS services.

"We called CliniSys and said: 'We need a website that care homes can use to order tests that sends the details straight into our systems' - and we worked in partnership with them to create the ICE Portal.

"Although the pandemic is reducing in the UK, we will continue to develop the portal as an important piece of testing infrastructure that we just did not have before the crisis.

"We will also look to extend the portal so it can be used by other services that need to order tests from outside our normal systems, such as sexual health services and the primary care Vitamin D testing service."

Black Country Pathology Services is a major pathology network that provides laboratory services to four large acute trusts from its base in Wolverhampton, where it has built a state-of-the-art hub for microbiology, histopathology and blood sciences.

The network is an exemplar for the use of CliniSys systems and runs both the WinPath Enterprise laboratory information system and the Integrated Clinical Environment, or ICE.

This is used by hospital departments and GPs to order tests and receive results, but it isn't used by care homes, which tend not to be connected to the highly secure networks over which it runs.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK last spring, NHS Wolverhampton CCG had to employ a team of administrators to enter requests into their order comms system; which was costly, time-consuming and ran the risk of transcription errors.

Black Country Pathology Services felt there had to be a better way, and worked with CliniSys, for which it is also a development partner, to create the ICE Portal as a lightweight, web-based system that is easy to use.

A nominated person at each care home just needs to log-in and create a list of patients and staff. The portal interface checks the details and associates them with a record on ICE. After that, the

nominated person can order tests for any residents or staff who need them and print off a barcoded form for each one.

When the sample arrives at the lab, the barcode is scanned so the test tube can be matched to the details that are already in the system. On completion of the test, the results are sent back to the ICE Portal and viewed by individuals with appropriate permission.

Senior ICT programme manager Nick Fudger added: "The ICE Portal is something that has been a positive of Covid-19.

"It will be hugely beneficial if we ever face a similar crisis, and it is something that can be scaled for other services once the current pandemic is over. It is a really good piece of work that we want to use as widely as possible in the future."

ICE product director Darren Solomon said CliniSys had been delighted to be involved in the project. "In the face of adversity, Black Country Pathology Services decided to work both harder and smarter and to try to deliver a better service to the people who needed them," he said.

"It was a really great piece of practical thinking, and what started out as a concept in Q3 2020, became a reality in Q1 2021. We are now focused on how we extend and evolve the ICE Portal, and are committed to working with both Black Country Pathology Services and our other customers on innovative workflows that can be supported by our new product.

## **Ends**

### **Notes for editors**

#### **About CliniSys Group:**

CliniSys Group is the largest laboratory diagnostic IT vendor in Europe, with leading country market shares and an innovative and wide-reaching suite of end-to-end diagnostic solutions.

Headquartered in England, with local offices in six European countries, it has for more than 40 years been at the forefront of diagnostics workflow, order communications and information management solutions supporting radiology, cardiology and all pathology disciplines including anatomical or cellular, molecular and genetics.

These encompass the complete workflow from order, clinical decision support, collection, processing, analysis, results and reporting, through integration into the clinical workflow. CliniSys Group has built an unrivalled reputation for the deployment of complex diagnostics networks and academic centres – and is the only vendor repeatably delivering across all disciplines end to end – at scale.