



**GIG**  
CYMRU  
**NHS**  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Bae Abertawe  
Swansea Bay University  
Health Board



<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>07 October 2021</b>		<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Laboratory Information Network Cymru FBC</b>			
<b>Report Author</b>	Andar Gunneberg, Consultant Chemical Pathologist and Clinical Lead for Laboratory Medicine Gareth Westlake, Head of Digital Business Services Chris Bimson, Business Finance Partner Neath Port Talbot Singleton Service Group			
<b>Report Sponsor</b>	Matt John, Director of Digital			
<b>Presented by</b>	Matt John, Director of Digital			
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	Open			
<b>Purpose of the Report</b>	To present a synopsis of the National Laboratory Network Cymru (LINC) Full Business Case (FBC) for a new National Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) for approval in principle.			
<b>Key Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) is end of life in 2025, therefore a replacement system must be established</li> <li>The ambition of WG and NHS organisations to achieve an integrated streamlined Pathology service across hospital sites within Health Boards, across Health Boards within Regional networks and across Wales in a national network</li> <li>A standardised national single LIMS is considered a critical enabler to achieve this ambition</li> <li>The safety, quality and efficiency benefits of the successful delivery of the programme</li> </ul>			
<b>Specific Action Required</b> <i>(please choose one only)</i>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Approval</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NOTE</b> the synopsis provided on the Full Business Case for a new National Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)</li> <li><b>NOTE</b> the necessity to replace the existing LIMS</li> <li><b>NOTE</b> the intention to achieve a single standardised end to end solution across Wales</li> <li><b>NOTE</b> that the planned cash releasing benefits over the 9yr programme provide a net saving for the organisation, but there is a net cost over the first 4 yrs prior to implementation. This will need to be met by</li> </ul>			

	<p>further savings in pathology or through development additions from 21/22.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>APPROVE</b> the LINC Business Case recognising that the additional implementation costs will need to be recovered from additional savings or/and development increases between 21/22 – 24/25</li> </ul>
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# **LABORATORY INFORMATION NETWORK CYMRU**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Laboratory Information Network Cymru (LINC) is a National programme run by the NHS Wales Collaborative to replace the existing Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). There is an emphasis on standardisation as a key enabler to facilitate service reconfiguration, to deliver an integrated streamlined Pathology service across hospital sites within Health Boards, across Health Boards within Regional networks and across Wales in a national network.

The programme aims to deliver a comprehensive “end to end” service encompassing:

- A single standardised configuration of one LIMS for all of Wales
- Electronic Test Requesting
- Automatic sharing of laboratory results between NHS Wales and NHS England, using the NPEX National Pathology Exchange

This paper provides a synopsis of the Full Business Case; however, more detailed information is available within the main body of the document which has been shared with Board Members as part of In-Committee Board papers. This is due to its commercially sensitive nature.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The objectives set out in “The Future of Pathology Services in Wales” (2008) and the “Pathology Statement of Intent” (2019) envisage fully integrated rationalised services within Health Boards, Regions and on an all Wales basis. A single standardised LIMS across Wales is a critical enabler to achieving this ambition.

Prior to 2013 there were 11 separate LIMS systems across 14 hospitals in 6 Health Boards in Wales. Whilst there has been a single LIMS in Wales (WLIMS) since 2015, different configurations were implemented at each health board and the opportunity for full standardisation was lost. Even so, a greater degree of standardisation has been achieved within this setup than in any other part of the UK. Reference ranges are extensively standardised, as are what constitutes test sets (e.g. which tests make up a “liver function test”). The remaining differences (e.g. there are currently some 800 rules defining what happens to a full blood count with differences in each Health Board) are sufficiently large to prevent the easy movement of staff and work around Wales in reconfigured “hub and spoke” networks. In particular, most Health Boards have been set up with a “hospital site” focus rather than a “network” focus.

The current system will be “end of life” by the end of 2025 and therefore pathology services across Wales need to have implemented a replacement LIMS by the end of 2025 to be able to continue to operate. Procuring a separate LIMS for SBUHB has not been considered as this would not be consistent with the objectives set out by WG.

The LINC programme has already been active for 2 years with funding support from WG and NHS Wales organisations. Thus far the programme has predominantly focussed on standardisation principles, the business case itself and the procurement of the preferred solution.

Once the FBC has been approved by NHS Wales organisations and WG, there will then be an 18 month period of development and testing, before implementations commence in 23/24. The programme schedule indicates that SBUHB would implement the new LIMS between January and March 2024 as the 4<sup>th</sup> organisation.

## **Benefits**

The main business needs identified in the Business Case have been described in the Strategic Case and are summarised in the Full Business Case. In summary the business needs are:

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| SO1 | To improve patient care, patient safety and patient outcomes.  |
| SO2 | To enable the transformation of healthcare services to be leaner, standardised, more sustainable and provide long-term stability.        |
| SO3 | To deliver a seamless, end-to-end technical solution for pathology services.   |
| SO4 | To contribute to the more prudent use of pathology resources through demand management, predictive costing and minimised financial risk. |
| SO5 | To meet current and future service requirement   |

SBUHB Pathology has documented anticipated benefits which need to be realised and can be achieved and measured at Health Board level. Increased service capacity due to increased cross-site working and standardised configuration across laboratories is the most important, and realising this is conditional on achieving greater regional working.

Other key benefits are:

- Fewer repeat tests improving patient safety and enabling efficiencies
- Reduced error rates will lead to improved clinical safety
- Contribute to single cancer pathway 62-day target and improving patient outcomes
- Patient results will be more accessible and easier to compare with standardisation
- Seamless integration with NHS England generated results

It is the responsibility of the Pathology service in SBUHB to ensure that the benefits listed in the SBUHB LINC Benefits register are realised and delivered. Work is under way to document baseline measurements. The facilitation of regional working with neighbouring Health Boards is a key benefit of LINC for SBUHB.

## **3. GOVERNANCE RISKS AND ISSUES**

LINC sits within the portfolio of the NHS Wales Health Collaborative and is accountable to the NHS Wales Collaborative Leadership Forum (CLF) and reports monthly to the NHSW Collaborative Executive Group (CEG). LINC is governed in accordance with the standards set out in Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) and PRINCE2 project management.

The LINC Programme Board (LPB) will act as the National Programme Board throughout the period of implementation until the LIMS Service is fully deployed across Wales and handed over to operations.

Locally, the SBUHB is establishing a Local Deployment Project Board to oversee the organisation's implementation of the service. The LDP is accountable to the Management Board, via the Digital Leadership Group and also will report up to the National LPB.

At national level, SBUHB has been represented by Consultant Pathologist Andar Gunneberg, who is a strong advocate and committed to the benefits of the programme.

### **Key Risks:**

- **Timescales** - The current LIMS system is end of life at the end of 2025 and therefore a replacement system must be in place. The programme has limited contingency to complete all implementations by then.  
Mitigation – programme governance. SBUHB to provide appropriate support to the programme
- **Delivering the overall aim of the programme** - A fundamental deliverable is the standardisation of process and datasets across Wales. This was only partially achieved by the first national LIMS programme.  
Mitigation – the programme has been robustly modelled to learn the lessons. SBUHB are very engaged and taking a lead role on standardisation.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial aspects of the case are commercially sensitive and have therefore been presented to Health Board Members in committee.

The FBC details the costs and potential savings over the 9 year programme period. Further work undertaken in SBUHB has identified that over the 9 year programme there is a net saving for the organisation. However, over the first 4 yrs prior to implementation there is a net cost. This will need to be met by further savings in pathology or/and through development additions between 21/22 – 24/25. The Digital Director, Finance Director and NPTS Service Director will establish the plan for addressing the additional costs in years 1-4 costs by December 2021.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to:

- **NOTE** the synopsis provided on the Full Business Case for a new National Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)
- **NOTE** the necessity to replace the existing LIMS
- **NOTE** the intention to achieve a single standardised end to end solution across Wales

- **NOTE** that the planned cash releasing benefits over the 9yr programme provide a net saving for the organisation, but there is a net cost over the first 4 yrs prior to implementation. This will need to be met by further savings in pathology or through development additions from 21/22.
- **APPROVE** the LINC Business Case recognising that the additional implementation costs will need to be recovered from additional savings or/and development increases between 21/22 – 24/25

Governance and Assurance		
<b>Link to Enabling Objectives</b> (please choose)	<b>Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities</b>	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people</b>	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health and Care Standards		
(please choose)	Staying Healthy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality, Safety and Patient Experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer repeat tests improving patient safety</li> <li>• Reduced error rates will lead to improved clinical safety</li> <li>• Contribute to single cancer pathway 62-day target and improving patient outcomes</li> <li>• Patient results will be more accessible and easier to compare with standardisation</li> </ul>		
Financial Implications		
Commercially sensitive		
Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)		
Approval of the FBC will lead to the HB establishing a legally binding contract with the system supplier		
Staffing Implications		
Pathology staff will be required to adopt the new system and nationally agreed standards.		
Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)		
N/A		
<b>Report History</b>		
<b>Reference Document</b>		