

**Press Release February 25, 2014**

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**NPEX, the National Pathology Exchange, is cited in NHS England's Digital First report as a key digital innovation transforming and improving the delivery of pathology services across the country**

Last week NHS England published its report *National Pathology Programme Digital First: Clinical Transformation through Pathology Innovation* highlighting the use of digital platforms and innovative technology in the delivery of pathology services across the country. NPEX, the National Pathology Exchange, features prominently as a key digital innovation.

NPEX was launched as a national NHS service in November 2010. It is the first of its kind in the UK – an innovative facility for NHS pathology laboratories connecting them to a national network enabling them to send and receive test requests and results electronically. Pathology is involved in 70% of all diagnoses made in the NHS and NPEX provides a highly efficient, cost-effective service to patients and medical professionals while at the same time contributing greatly to improved clinical outcomes. NPEX was developed by X-Lab, a company based at the University of Leeds, and is available nationally to all NHS pathology laboratories, through The Health Informatics Service, a highly respected NHS organisation which provides IT systems and services to 23,000 users.

Around 30 NHS laboratories are now using NPEX to digitise their lab-to-lab communications. NPEX connects NHS pathology laboratories across the UK to a national hub in a secure NHS data centre so that test referrals and results can be sent between laboratories electronically in a few seconds. Connecting to the national exchange allows a lab to use its own lab system (LIMS) to send test requests to any other lab on the exchange and receive the results electronically direct into their LIMS. This means the connection to all the other laboratories on NPEX can be quickly implemented without expensive changes to existing laboratory systems. As a result, the NHS eliminates manual data entry, reduces the risk of human error and increases the speed with which results can be delivered to patients and their doctors, while the savings on reduced paperwork can be around £2 per specimen.

The aim is to roll out NPEX to 50 percent of pathology labs around the country by the end of 2014. Christopher Johnson, National Pathology Lead at NHS England, said: "The NPEX system is really fundamental in allowing us to bring pathology from a very fragmented service to a more standardised service – based on standards devised by NHS England – and that has got to be the right way to go from a safety and cost-efficiency point of view. I think it is a fantastic system and I would like it to see it become

universal. X-Lab is a unique partnership between industry, the University of Leeds and the Health Informatics Service.”

**For further information on NPEX contact The Health Informatics Service**  
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**Notes to editors:**

1. NPEX – the National Pathology Exchange, developed by X-Lab Ltd, was launched in November 2010 at Microsoft’s Head Offices in Reading. It is an innovative facility for NHS pathology laboratories which connects them to a national network enabling them to send and receive test requests and results electronically, thereby providing a cost-effective and highly efficient service to patients and clinicians while at the same time eliminating a complex NHS paper trail. NPEX was shortlisted for the national E-Health Insider award for Interoperability Service of the Year in 2010.
2. X-Lab Ltd, based at the University of Leeds, was launched in 2008 to develop new national solutions for NHS pathology. In 2009 it installed the NPEX lab-to-lab system across the nine labs in the Greater Manchester Pathology Network, one of the first and largest in the UK to take a ‘holistic’ view of pathology services. Its stated aim is ‘to deliver high quality patient-centred pathology services’ with an emphasis on achieving better equity of access, faster results reporting and improved accuracy rates.
3. The Health Informatics Service is an NHS IT organisation hosted by Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust which supports 23,000 users across the NHS. The Health Informatics Service aims to be an agent for change through effective IT.