



# Case study

Implementing University Hospital Southampton's new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)

## Background

University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS) provides healthcare services for Southampton, central southern England and the Channel Islands. It is one of six trusts in the Southern Counties Pathology Network.

UHS's laboratory department had a LIMS in place but its support was due to come to an end in 2024.

The Southern Counties Pathology Network was in the process of rolling out a LIMS established in one of its partners, One Dorset Pathology, across the network so UHS needed to harmonise with this system when it moved to a new LIMS contract.

## The need

UHS needed to plan and implement a programme to adopt the LIMS established by One Dorset Pathology so that it was consistent with the other organisations in the Southern Counties Pathology Network.

This required expertise to review the existing processes and procedures for the management of its current LIMS against the approach of the new LIMS, to ensure an efficient transition from one system to another.



# The solution



Ethical Healthcare are providing project management expertise to support UHS with the transition between LIMS.

This involved auditing current working practices and identifying where new or improved procedures were required. Key to this was establishing governance procedures within UHS to ensure the programme was managed effectively. Stakeholder mapping was carried out to identify all relevant partners, with communications and reporting processes developed alongside this to ensure everyone was kept up to date with objectives, tasks and performance.

Ethical used its project management experience to help UHS establish project implementation strategies to get the most out of the new LIMS. This included developing strategic approaches to:

- Configuration
- Testing
- Training
- Risk management
- Issues management

# Challenges



There were several challenges involved in implementing a new LIMS system:

- **Change management and engagement:** it was vital to engage clinical and management teams in the implementation process to ensure the new ways of working and technology were fit for purpose.
- **Network implementation:** other trusts in the network were implementing the LIMS at the same time so it was important to build strong communications with partners to share lessons learned and best practice.
- **Teaching hospital:** UHS is a teaching hospital with a large and complex pathology department which had to be considered when planning and implementing the system change over.

# Impact



The expertise and knowledge provided by Ethical has helped UHS to plan and manage its implementation approach and get into a go-live position for its new LIMS.

The governance and strategic approaches introduced by the programme have ensured work is planned and delivered robustly, with clear objectives, outcomes and performance measures.



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**This LIMS implementation is the most complex, challenging and demanding IT roll-out that anyone in the network has been involved in. Having an experienced and professional project management team in Ethical Healthcare has provided the backbone and structure to support us across all of the different, simultaneous large workstreams.**

**We have been able to give regular comprehensive reports and assurance to both the trust and the network that the project is being managed and monitored, and that it has a governance structure and risk management format that we can rely on to navigate through this extremely challenging process.**

**The project management styles incorporate the latest methods and toolkits, moving to Agile processes at just the right times, flagging concerns and escalations appropriately, arranging engagement meetings with key people and involving local experts.**

**I have nothing but praise for the way that the Ethical team has worked with us as partners. It does feel like we're all in this together.**

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**Linda Sayburn**, Pathology Operations Director,  
University Hospital Southampton NHS  
Foundation Trust

## Contact us



If you would like support to plan and implement a LIMS in your organisation, please contact Ash Tailor, Head of Delivery, on [ash@ethicalhealthcare.org.uk](mailto:ash@ethicalhealthcare.org.uk).

