DELIVERING SCIENCE
SUPPORTING HEALTHCARE

NHS
North West
London Pathology

# NWLP strategy

## 2023 - 2028

**E**xpert, **C**ollaborative, **C**aring, **P**atient focused







June 2023

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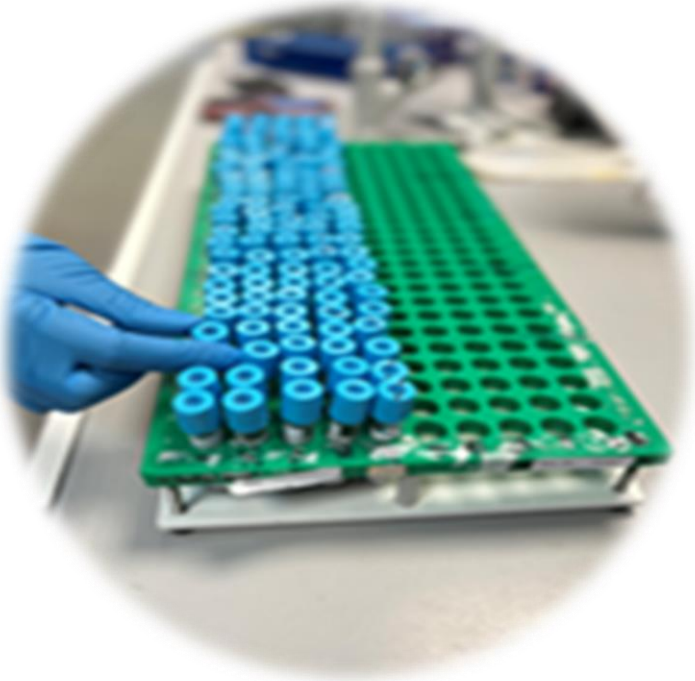


# 1. Foreword

NWLP strategic plan for the next 5 years reflects our ambition to improve and evolve our laboratory diagnostic services in sync with the changing role of diagnostics in healthcare, as well as to support the shift towards a more preventative healthcare model.

As an organisation, one of our strengths is our long term vision and horizon scanning. With this in mind, we have focused on our strategy to define and refine the vision and our intended actions that will pave the way for the evolution of our Joint Venture to the establishment of a nationally leading scientific organisation with a clinical purpose.

We are the largest, truly consolidated NHS service and we are the spearheads inspiring national and regional direction and development opportunities.

We are proud of what we have achieved in the formation of the network, but we should never rest on our laurels.

Our strategy comes at a seminal moment as the diagnostics sector navigates a turning point in their role to healthcare and significant technological advances have the potential to transform patient care.

Our strategic plan sets out an aspiring vision for our future, and a roadmap to its achievement.

We see the next 5 years as a period of considerable change, opportunity and ultimately advancement in our diagnostic services and their role in supporting healthcare outcomes.

Multiple new innovations with the potential to diagnose serious illnesses earlier and improve outcomes, as well as the significant growth of digital technologies and the potential that artificial intelligence has to offer, have played a significant role in shaping our strategic plan for the next 5 years with innovation and technology being one of our key priorities.

The establishment of the Integrated Care Systems as well as the NWL Acute Collaborative are bringing greater integration and collaboration that will drive population health and healthcare and will improve access to diagnostics. NWLP has a significant role to play in achieving these aims and our strategy is focusing on the way we will work collaboratively by way of existing and new partnerships towards this direction.

As an NHS organisation our strategy supports the NHS-wide ambition to become the world's first healthcare system to reach net zero carbon emissions. One of our strategic objectives is to reduce our carbon footprint and work collaboratively with our Owner Trusts to deliver sustainability targets.

Our 5-year strategy also comes at a time when the NHS diagnostics sector is facing significant challenges across the UK. The aging equipment and inadequate laboratory facilities within hospital buildings, the national shortages in the diagnostics workforce, and the significant investment required for digital and new technologies, are some of the key topics that our strategic plan aims to address with immediate and long-term objectives.

We are uncompromising about our ambition to maintain industry-leading laboratory services into the future and we are committed to realise our renewed vision.

We look forward to working with our colleagues, our Owner Trusts and external partners to deliver this strategy.

"A renewed vision towards a leading organisation in laboratory diagnostics, where scientific expertise combined with technological advances and innovation will play pivotal role in patient outcomes"

**Saghar Missaghian-Cully**
**MSc FIBMS CSci DBMS FCMI CMgr MBA**
**NWLP Managing Director**






# 2. About us

**North West London Pathology is an NHS partnership between Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The organisation is hosted by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust but is jointly owned by the three Trusts. We are now one of the largest laboratory diagnostic services providers in the UK.**

Since our establishment in 2017, we have made remarkable progress. Our organisation stands out in England as one of the pioneers in creating a fully integrated NHS pathology network.

The NWLP network operates on a hub and spoke model, delivering laboratory diagnostics at seven hospital sites across London. Annually, we process an impressive 35 million tests, offering a wide range of diagnostic and clinical support services in North West London. Our services cater to approximately 280 GP practices within the North West London Integrated Care System, benefiting a population exceeding two millions.

At our hub laboratory located at Charing Cross Hospital, we perform the majority of routine, specialist, and non-urgent laboratory testing. Urgent tests required for immediate patient management and treatment are rapidly performed at our spoke site laboratories, which operate round the clock, 24/7.

Our Owner Trusts have made significant investments over the past six years to drive our transformation. This transformation was comprehensive, encompassing new organisational structures and governance, redevelopment of laboratory spaces, implementation of advanced analytical equipment, and deployment of cutting-edge information systems. Notably, we have also adopted digital technology in our services, recognising its crucial role in shaping the future of diagnostics.

# Our diagnostic services

NWLP offers a comprehensive testing repertoire which includes internationally recognised specialist services affiliated with clinical expertise within our partner Trusts and links with Imperial College. We are committed to delivering first class diagnostic laboratory services with scientific and clinical expertise covering over 23 specialist areas.

## Blood Sciences Division

### Clinical Biochemistry

NWLP provides a 24 hour, 7 day acute core clinical biochemistry service on all our laboratory sites. Biochemistry tests are used to investigate or monitor major organ function (liver, kidney, bones, heart and muscles), diabetes, hormones, malignancies, proteins and drugs. The majority of core clinical biochemistry tests are fully automated, with manual investigations preformed where required. Clinical Biochemistry measures a wide range of substances in bodily fluids, predominantly blood (serum or plasma), urine and cerebrospinal fluid.

### Andrology

Our Andrology department at Hammersmith Hospital specialises in the investigation and diagnosis of male infertility. The laboratory is licenced by the Human Fertility & Embryology Authority (HFEA) to undertake sperm cryopreservation. This service is available for patients with cancer as well as patients undergoing fertility treatment. The Andrology laboratory works closely with the Wolfson Family Clinic at Hammersmith Hospital, and has established relationships with IVF units in the UK and other countries. Our laboratory provides one of the UK's only dedicated male fertility clinics offering services such as microsurgical testicular sperm extraction (mTESE) and testicular mapping.

### Aldosterone and Renin

The Aldosterone and Renin laboratory is a member of the Supra-Regional Assay service and is investigating disorders of aldosterone production, which often result in significant effects on salt and water balance, leading to clinical disturbance of blood pressure and electrolyte levels. Our service receives requests from over 50 hospitals nationwide, as well as significant local demand. The service is renowned for its consistent quality of results, as demonstrated by QA schemes, and especially for the quality of extensive clinical interpretative comments on reports.

### Endocrinology

The Endocrine laboratories provide a wide ranging service for over 30 hormones and associated analytes to four teaching hospitals, each providing specialist clinical endocrine services. The laboratory is a designated Supra-Regional Assay Service provider for calcitonin, insulin, C-peptide and gastrointestinal hormones (Gut Hormones). The laboratory also provides a service for a number of steroid and peptide hormones, and binding proteins to hospitals in and around London. Techniques available include automated and manual immunoassay and LCMS.

The laboratory staff are involved in both teaching and research activities; particular areas of interest include reproductive hormones, vitamin D, and calcium metabolism and assay development.

## Bone metabolism

Our bone metabolism service is an associate member of the Supra-Regional Assay Service for bone metabolism and participating in various research and development projects. The bone metabolism service supports the Osteoporosis Clinic and Bone Metabolism Group and is closely linked to The Muscular Skeletal Research Group at Imperial.

Markers of bone metabolism are useful in the assessment of bone turnover in metabolic bone disease, particularly osteoporosis and Paget's disease, where they have an active role in the monitoring of response to therapy. The laboratory routinely measures three bone markers: urinary N-telopeptide (NTx), serum bone specific alkaline phosphatase (BALP) and serum procollagen type 1 N-terminal peptide (P1NP). Other bone markers are available for research and development projects on request (including plasma CTx, osteocalcin and sclerostin).

## Metabolic

The metabolic section includes high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) assays to assess biogenic amine production. Sympathoadrenal catecholamine production is assessed using urine catecholamines/metanephrines, enterochromaffin serotonin using urine 5HIAA. HPLC permits separation from interfering substances and the service also offers Vitamin A and Vitamin E analysis by HPLC. A close association between the laboratory and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust clinicians has permitted us to fine-tune our quoted reference intervals for biogenic amines to give 95% specificity, thereby minimising false positives without any significant impact on diagnostic sensitivity.

The service also performs initial investigations for porphyria (urine porphyrins and PBG screens) and sugar metabolism. Urine and faecal samples are screened for reducing substances and the sugars in positive samples are then identified.

We also offer whole gene sequencing for the genetic diagnosis of Primary Hyperoxaluria types 1, 2 and 3 and for a number of steroidogenic defects and we recently started offering a renal stone service.






## Oncology

Our Oncology laboratory provides a comprehensive range of serological tumour marker tests and is a designated Supra-regional Assay Service laboratory for human chorionic gonadotrophin (hCG) and alpha-fetoprotein (AFP). Since its inception our laboratory has expanded its repertoire of tumour markers and developed a follow-up service for germ cell tumour (GCT) patients.

Our GTN and GCT follow-up service involves automatic dispatch of request forms for tumour marker analysis at specific time intervals, in accordance with clinical guidelines. Elevated results are automatically flagged and being fed back to the consulting clinician, thus minimising clinical risk and associated cost, as well as empowering patients to be directly involved in their clinical management.

The laboratory's work is coordinated through Oncology's in-house IT system, which can provide log-linear graphical reporting of serial tumour marker results and analysis of the rates of change in marker levels; information that indicates the relative success of treatment or rapidity of tumour growth.

The specialist Oncology laboratory is located within a clinical Oncology department and it is actively engaged in research, particularly with hCG and trophoblastic disease, providing clinical interpretative advice for the assays it performs.

## Specialist protein service

The Specialist Proteins laboratory routinely analyses large numbers of serum and urine samples for electrophoresis and immunofixation, using up-to-date technologies, including capillary zone electrophoresis. The laboratory provides a substantial service to four hospital sites, as well as receiving samples from a number of referring laboratories.

The service also provides routine analysis in cryoglobulins, serum free light chains, apolipoproteins (ApoA, ApoB and Lp(a), immunoglobulins, alpha-1 antitrypsin and beta-2 microglobulin. CSF analysis includes oligoclonal studies and investigation of CSF leaks using the measurement of beta-2 transferrin. Additionally, the laboratory regularly analyses a series of isoenzymes, including alkaline phosphatase and creatine kinase, and it offers a Faecal Calprotectin and a FIT (Faecal Immunochemical Test) service.

## Trace Elements

The Trace Element laboratory is a member of the Supra-Regional Assay Service and is recognised by the Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS) for occupational lead monitoring.

The laboratory measures an extensive repertoire of trace elements routinely and is able to measure additional elements on request. It is participating in a variety of research and development projects, with findings presented for publication and peer review.

The laboratory has a number of special interests including:

- The development of fractionated copper assays for the diagnosis of Wilson's disease
- The measurement of titanium by high resolution magnetic sector-field ICP-MS
- Metal release from surgical implants with a particular interest in titanium

The service can be used by any external hospital, laboratory or other appropriate organisation.

## Haematology

The Haematology service performs full blood counts and secondary testing to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of various disorders. Our laboratories also offer additional tests to identify specific conditions, e.g. malaria screening, infectious mononucleosis, and reviewing blood film morphology. Our Haematology service is supported by specialist haematologists for the diagnosis and treatment of complex haematological disorders.

## Special Haematology

The Special Haematology laboratory offers screening tests to identify disorders of haemoglobin production, e.g. sickle-cell disease and thalassemia. The service participates in the NHS antenatal screening programme and can provide testing for unexplained haemolysis and red cell enzyme studies, e.g. G6PD, pyruvate kinase and other rare red cell studies.

## Specialist Coagulation

The specialist Coagulation service offers comprehensive testing for the diagnosis of Haemophilia (A & B) as well as other bleeding disorders such as von Willebrand's.

## Blood Transfusion

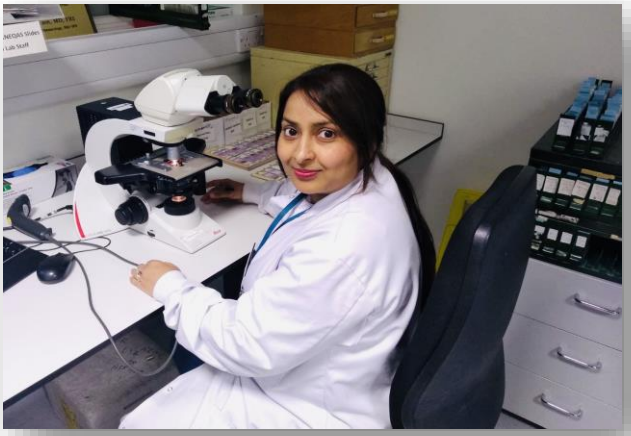
Our Blood Transfusion laboratories are based in all hospital sites and perform routine and urgent serological, pre-transfusion testing (e.g. of blood group and antibody status) for the issuing of blood components and blood products specific to the needs of a patient. We offer a complete antibody investigation service and can arrange for secondary testing by the NHSBT laboratories for more complex investigations.

Our transfusion laboratories are also responsible for controlling the issue of anti-D, recombinant coagulations factors and Octaplex.

## Point of Care Testing (POCT)

NWLP provides management and support for POCT services across seven hospital sites in North West London. The scope of our service provision includes (though not exclusively) advice on the appropriateness of POCT, device procurement, device evaluation/verification, clinical advice, oversight of device maintenance, quality assurance, staff training, auditing and overall implementation of the POCT quality management system.



# Cellular Pathology Division

## Histology

Our consultant-led Histopathology laboratory at Charing Cross provides both routine and specialist services for histological diagnosis using a wide variety of techniques. By looking at the way that the cells are arranged, how they have developed and how they are functioning, it is possible to determine if a patient has a disease, inflammation, a cancerous or a non-cancerous growth.

In cases where sufficient diagnosis from a single stained tissue section is not possible, supplementary tests are required such as special stains, immunocytochemistry and molecular techniques, as deemed appropriate by the reporting pathologist. Our services are moving to complete digitisation with access to artificial intelligence supported through advanced research and links with Imperial College.

## MOHS

Our highly specialised scientific team works across hospital sites to support the on-site MOHS micrographic surgery clinics. MMS involves surgical excision of a tumour along with a small area of the surrounding skin. The edges are immediately checked under a microscope to make sure that the tumour has been removed completely. If the microscopic examination shows that it has not, further surgery is being performed, usually on the same day. This method minimises the removal of healthy tissue and reduces scarring, while in parallel ensures the complete removal or the tumour.

## Electron Microscopy (EM) Unit

The EM Unit at the Charing Cross Hospital has been in operation for more than 40 years, offering an accredited full diagnostic service in conventional transmission electron microscopy, including specimen preparation techniques and interpretation of ultrastructural examination for native and transplant renal biopsies. In addition, a full service is provided on request for other surgical biopsies including peripheral nerve, skeletal muscle, skin, and neonatal duodenal biopsies.

## Diagnostic Cytology

Our highly specialised scientific team in Diagnostic Cytology works in close collaboration with our Clinical services, offering examination of cells suspended in fluids removed from patients or extracted from whole organs under suction. By examining the way that the cells are arranged and their appearance, it is possible to determine if a patient has cancer, inflammation or evidence of crystals.

## Specialist Integrated Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service

The Specialist Integrated Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service (SIHMDS) includes immunophenotyping (flow cytometry), cytogenetics, and molecular genetics for the diagnosis of Haematological malignancies - a diverse group of cancers that affect the blood, bone marrow and lymphatic systems.

- SIHMDS: Molecular Pathology

The molecular genetics laboratory offers a variety of tests to study a range of haematological malignancies which are essential for the diagnosis, prognosis and monitoring of disease. The tests provided are either for molecular diagnostics or minimal residual disease monitoring.

- SIHMDS: Cytogenetics

Cytogenetic investigations study haematological malignancies at a chromosomal level. Chromosome abnormalities play a central role in the diagnosis and monitoring of treatment for many haematological malignancies and some tumours of solid tissue. Once identified, chromosome abnormalities can also be used to monitor patients' response to therapy. Cytogenetic analysis has the potential to identify disease progression.

- Immunophenotyping

Immunophenotyping tests are used to diagnose and classify suspected haematological abnormalities involving white blood cells. This tests are vital in supplementing cytogenetics and histopathology tests in order to provide further information on cell type and maturation, supporting clinicians in formulating specific and effective treatment plans.

The immunophenotyping laboratory performs flow cytometric analysis for a wide variety of disorders, including: acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) myeloproliferative disorders (MPD) chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) aplastic anaemia and other pancytopenias plasma cell disorders lymphocytosis investigation of CSF samples or effusions investigation of paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria.

# Infection & Immunity Division

### Immunology

The Immunology service performs testing to diagnose patients with allergies, defective immune systems and autoimmune diseases. This includes testing for thyroid disease, coeliac disease and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Immunology also performs tests that detect hidden tuberculosis (TB) infection. The department participates in numerous research programmes, looking at allergy, HIV infection, immune deficiency, vaccine responses and immune function.

Additionally a molecular service is also available and an extensive sequencing service to assist in disease monitoring and response to therapies is currently in development.

### Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics

The Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics laboratory performs tissue typing and cross-matching to support haemotopoetic stem cell transplantation (HSCT), renal and pancreas transplantation. The laboratory also performs the HLA-typing to support:

- diagnosis of Ankylosing spondylitis (HLA-27 associated) and Behcet's (HLA-B51).
- diagnosis of Coeliac disease (HLA-DQ2, DQ8) and narcolepsy (HLA-DQ6).
- HLA-B57 typing is also performed prior to administration of the anti-retroviral drug Abacavir, with HLA- B*57:01 positivity conferring a high risk of a hypersensitivity reaction.

Our service is regional, including out-of-hours donor typing. We work closely with laboratories in other Trusts to ensure the on-going support for transplant patients across the region with pre-and post-transplant testing, and monitoring of patients.

## Microbiology

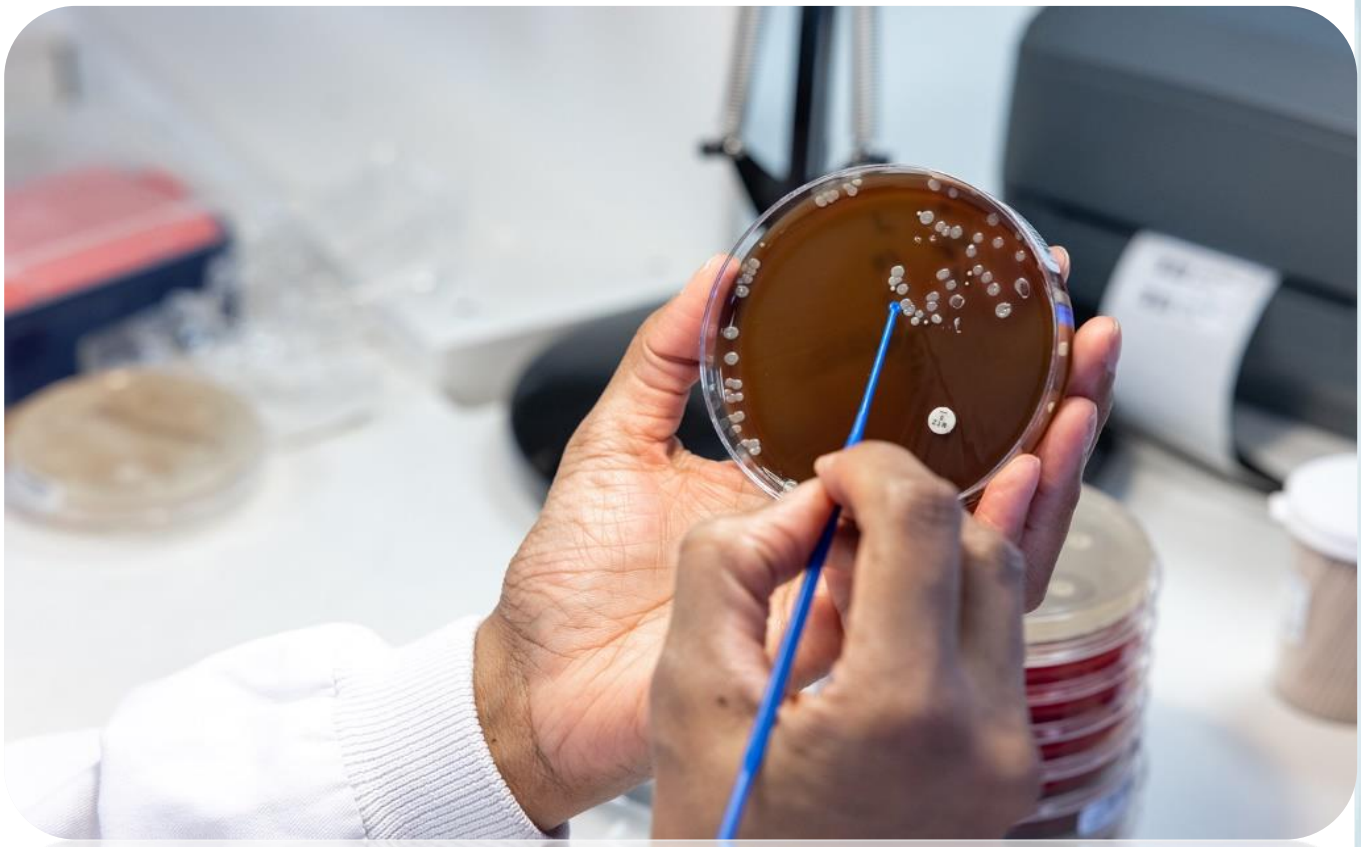
The Microbiology laboratory provides a full range of testing for bacterial and fungal culture, as well as the antibiotic sensitivity of pathogenic (infectious) organisms. This includes those that can cause urinary, respiratory, gastrointestinal, wound or skin infections, and meningitis.

The laboratory screens for a number of organisms that can cause cross-infection problems for hospitals, such as MRSA and Clostridium difficile (C. diff), and performs intestinal parasite identification, testing for tuberculosis and screening for genitourinary infections. Additionally, with the use of state-of-the-art molecular technology the service can provide real-time, random access for diagnosis of C. diff, TB, chlamydia/gonorrhoea and other infections.

## Virology and Serology

The Virology and Microbial Serology service analyses serum to detect antibodies and antigens in the blood, which can indicate the presence of a range of viruses and other organisms, including HIV, hepatitis B and C, and syphilis. The department provides a full diagnostic service, which includes supporting the management of infections during pregnancy, in infants, throughout the community, and in outbreak situations.

Additionally the service can check the level of immune protection against hepatitis B and rubella (German measles), and use advanced molecular techniques to detect the viruses that cause SARS CoV, flu, herpes and other respiratory, gastrointestinal and central nervous system infections.



# 3.
# Our vision & values



## Values and vision

We have established our values and refreshed our vision, which are essential as we strive to develop our strategic ambitions and prepare for the future.

### Our values

Our values are the foundation of our organisational culture and serve as guiding principles for all our endeavours. As part of our strategic approach, we are fully committed to embedding these values throughout every facet of our organisation, ensuring that they are deeply ingrained in everything we do.

One of our key priorities is to strengthen our brand identity, making it synonymous not only with our expert scientific knowledge but also with our values and ethos. By doing so, we aim to create a cohesive and recognisable identity that resonates with our stakeholders and reflects our commitment to excellence.



Collaborative



Expert



Caring



Patient Focussed

## Our vision

"To be the industry leading laboratory diagnostic service and a recognised centre of excellence, driving cutting edge technological advances and innovation to support sustainable clinical services"

# 4.
# A changing landscape in diagnostics

The need for radical investment in and reform of diagnostic services was recognised at the time the NHS Long Term Plan was published in 2019.

In 2020, the pandemic exposed the critical role of diagnostics and further amplified the need for radical change in the provision of diagnostic services. It also provided an opportunity for change.

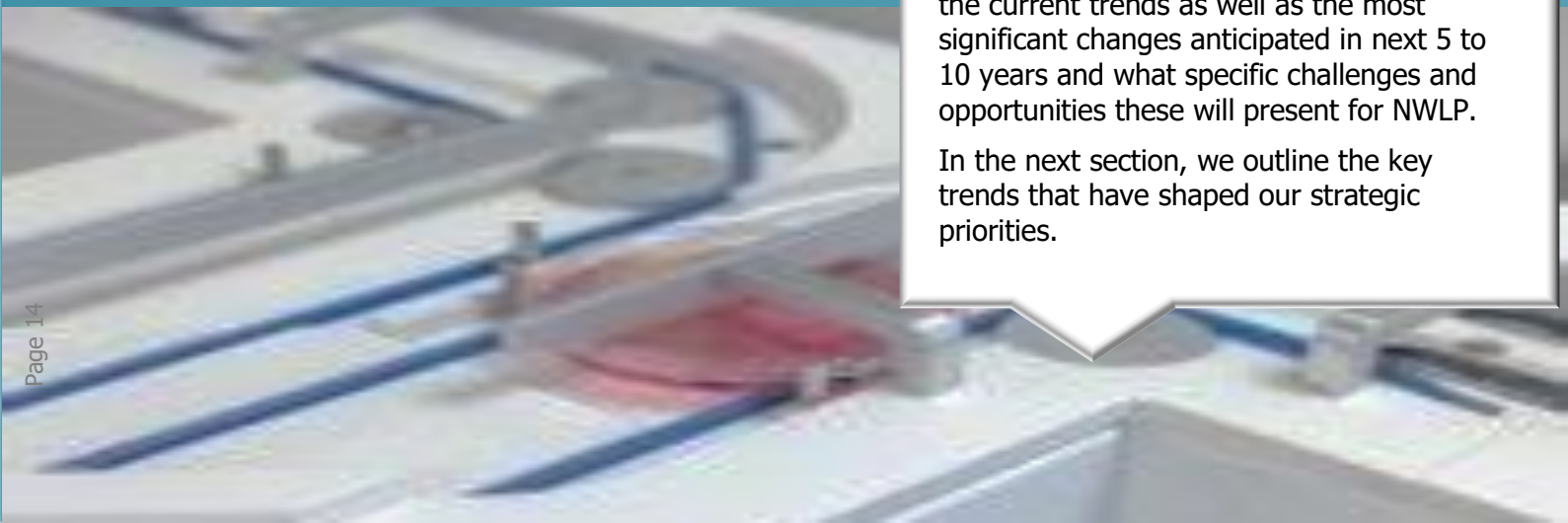
The review report, Diagnostics: recovery and renewal, published in October 2020 (*Independent Review of Diagnostic Services for NHS England 2020),* recommended significant reform and investment in diagnostic services and highlighted the areas of focus. NHS England priorities and operational planning guidance for 2023/24 identified the role of diagnostics in supporting the wider aims of clearing the backlog of patients by increasing productivity through digital diagnostic investments and meeting optimal rates for test throughput. The publication of the government's Medical Technology Strategy in 2023 has also recognised the role that diagnostics can play in improving patient care and outcomes.

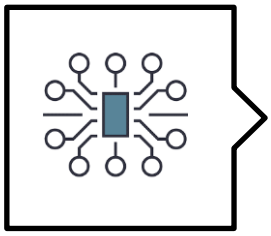
NWLP as a leader in its field needs a strategy that anticipates, recognises, and responds to the changing context and the challenges and opportunities arising. This section highlights what we anticipate will be the most significant trends and developments in the next 5 years. We are also committed to monitor the landscape of diagnostics and its advancement and change, and ensure that we factor these into our strategy with frequent reviews as we implement our strategic plan.

**Trends and developments**

As we developed our strategy, we looked at the current trends as well as the most significant changes anticipated in next 5 to 10 years and what specific challenges and opportunities these will present for NWLP.

In the next section, we outline the key trends that have shaped our strategic priorities.





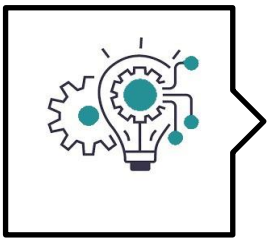
## 1 Integrated care systems

Integration has been a major focus of the health and care system for some time. In the post- pandemic era the establishment of the Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) and Boards (ICBs), is focussing in driving outcomes in population health and health care, with a particular emphasis on diagnostics.

The new Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs) across England established to address the 'blockage in access to diagnostics and deliver tests closer to home' (Department of Health and Social Care et al 2021). The CDSs aim to alleviate the bottleneck in diagnostic access and enhance capacity, ensuring that individuals in need can readily access diagnostic services.

The field of diagnostics faces several challenges, including aging equipment, inadequate facilities, workforce shortages, and the pressing need for digital infrastructure and information-sharing systems. Recognising these obstacles, the government has announced investments to support the necessary improvements in the diagnostics sector.

ICBs will play a pivotal role in driving the agenda for the diagnostics sector. It is crucial to acknowledge that optimising the utilisation of diagnostics holds significant value for the NHS, leading to improved outcomes for patients. NWLP is actively collaborating with its Owner Trusts and the NWL ICS to unlock and realise the full potential and value of diagnostics.



## 2 Innovation and technological advances

Recent technological advances and innovations in the field of diagnostics have the potential to diagnose serious illnesses earlier and improve outcomes, alongside driving efficiency. The future of laboratory diagnostics is likely to be shaped by several trends such as:

Digitisation and artificial intelligence, robotics and automation: New digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, and software as a medical device, will provide the opportunity to automate some core processes in healthcare and transform how we work. Increasing automation will improve accuracy and speed of testing.

Predictive analytics: Advanced analytics and machine learning algorithms are likely to enable earlier detection of diseases and identification of patients at higher risk for developing certain conditions.

Integration of laboratory data with electronic health records and other digital health technologies is likely to improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of laboratory testing.

Point-of-care testing: Development of portable, low-cost devices for point-of-care testing is expected to enable faster diagnosis and treatment, particularly in resource-limited settings.

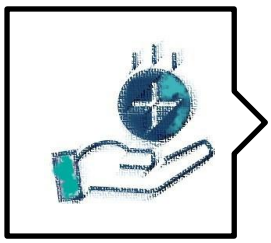
Biosensors and Biomarkers: Recent developments of biomarkers for portable biosensor systems with various sample types provide an excellent opportunity for POC diagnostics as well as remote health care monitoring. Advances in the identification and validation of biomarkers are likely to lead to new diagnostic tests and targeted therapies and are primary candidates for future cancer diagnosis.

Liquid biopsies: Minimum residual disease monitoring with ultrasensitive liquid biopsy tests is an important breakthrough for early detection of cancer and cancer recurrence.

Direct to Consumer (DTC)-led diagnostics: There is an increasing interest for people to use diagnostic test to understand their health better. At-home diagnostics is a growing market that may benefit the healthcare system, and reduce cost of care.

Overall, laboratory diagnostics will continue to play a critical role in healthcare, enabling earlier and more accurate diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The field is expected to undergo significant transformation in the coming years, driven by technological innovations and the increasing demand for personalised, patient-centred care.

## 3 The Value of Diagnostics

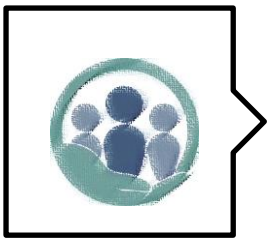


The value in diagnostics is changing. The role of diagnostic testing goes beyond the provision of information pertaining to the current condition of the patient. The digital and health data revolution are significant shapers for the future of diagnostics.

Diagnostics have an important role to play in making the shift to population health and a greater focus on prevention by improving early detection and diagnosis. The future of diagnostic services will become more proactive, supported by analysis of healthcare data from a much wider population, enabled by machine learning & AI technology.

Laboratory medicine, imaging and endoscopy all contribute diagnostic patient data. Through integration and incorporation, this data can be converted into knowledge, which will deliver faster and better clinical outcomes, as well as significant downstream savings through early identification of disease.

NWLP strongly supports the shift in the NHS towards a more prevention-focused healthcare model. Adding value to quality laboratory medicine services comprises a wide range of opportunities to go beyond a simple request-result service, this includes our priority area of Clinical Decision Support through the unlocking the value in our Data and services.



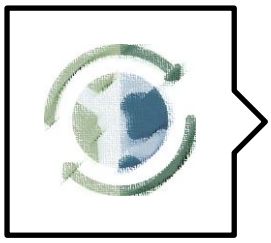
## 4 Patient at the centre of diagnostics

The pandemic has significantly increased patient awareness and willingness to engage in self-testing, monitoring, and proactive healthcare using diagnostic tools. This signals the necessity of adopting new equipment and technology beyond traditional laboratory settings, bringing them closer to patients.

As a result, the dynamics between patients and healthcare specialists are evolving, with a shift from emergency-based healthcare to predictive, personalised healthcare management. This transformation is driving the emergence of consumer-driven shared decision-making models aimed at improving health outcomes, reducing overall healthcare costs, and minimising disease prevalence.

NWLP is actively focused on supporting the provision of at-home and decentralised testing. A recent study conducted by NWLP for patients attending lipid, diabetes, and tuberculosis clinics who utilised a postal capillary blood service, revealed that 87% of patients found the method of blood collection to be very easy, and a significant percentage of them recommended the service to their friends and family. Recognising the advantages for both patients and the NHS, the current Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has also endorsed this opportunity.

In our role, we have a crucial responsibility to support the drive towards patient empowerment and engagement by providing the necessary diagnostic services and tools.



## 5 Sustainability

In October 2020, the Greener NHS National Programme published its new strategy, '*Delivering a net zero National Health Service'*. The report set out trajectories and actions for the entire NHS to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040 for the emissions it controls directly, and 2045 for those it can influence (such as those embedded within the supply chain). Each NHS Trust as well as each ICS is required develop a Green Plan to detail their approaches to reducing their emissions in line with the national trajectories.

As an NHS organisation, NWLP is supporting the NHS-wide ambition to become the world's first healthcare system to reach net zero carbon emissions. One of our strategic priority areas is to develop a number of strategic initiatives towards reducing environmental impact and work collaboratively with our Owner Trusts to meet the national targets.

# 5.

# Our strategic goals

Our renewed vision exemplifies our unwavering passion and commitment to the future of diagnostic services, recognising their pivotal role in driving improved clinical outcomes through technological advancements and innovation.

To translate this vision into action, we have developed a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan that charts the path toward its realisation. This strategic plan is built upon four core pillars, which serve as the bedrock for our objectives and milestones over the next five years. Importantly, our strategic goals are aligned with those of our Owner Trusts and the North West London Integrated Care System, fostering collaboration and synergy within the healthcare ecosystem.

VISION

"To be the **industry leading laboratory diagnostic service** and a recognised centre of excellence, driving cutting edge technological advances and **innovation to support sustainable clinical services"**

STRATEGIC GOALS

**WORKFORCE**

A thriving, sustainable and agile workforce that is empowered to deliver our vision.

**INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY**

Be at the forefront of diagnostic innovation by harnessing the latest developments in laboratory medicine to continuously improve patient outcomes.

**OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE & SUSTAINABILITY**

Establish an environment that fosters a mindset of high performance and enables continuous sustainable improvement.

**GROWTH & CUSTOMERS**

Advance our market position as a leading provider of laboratory medicine by offering an attractive customer proposition.

**G1** **G2** **G3** **G4**

**Owner Trusts**
**Integrated Care Board**

G1

# Strategic Goal G1:
# Workforce

## A thriving, sustainable and agile workforce that is empowered to deliver our vision.

**Strategic Ambition:**

We are proud of our achievements to date. Our plans look to address the significant healthcare challenges that continue to affect patients and our local communities. Beyond that, we look to recognise the challenges as seen through the experiences of our key stakeholders, our staff being central and integral to this.

What emerges are issues such as a shortfall in the supply of some elements of our workforce; a growing demand to meet the needs of the population and wider health services; innovation and transformation in models of care, medicines and technology and a strong backdrop of financial restraint.

Taking into account the challenges in a post global pandemic arena, we have also considered where we have to be adaptable and flexible in our approach to service delivery, and ensure that we consider and capture the opportunities as a result of this.

We need to support and develop our team members at every point in their career journey, starting at attraction and recruitment; to nurturing those at the beginning and developing throughout their careers; and to find ways, through a person centred approach, to enable staff to continue working in ways that fit in with their lives and both physical and emotional demands.

### Priority areas

**To deliver our strategic goal we will focus on the following priority areas:**

- ✓ **G1.01 Cultural Development**
- ✓ **G1.02 Talent Attraction and Retention**
- ✓ **G1.03 Training & Development**

In developing our Workforce Strategy, we have considered the national and local drivers for change. These pressures create a platform for change and innovation, and we will focus on the fundamental requirement to adapt the workforce to better support the patient and population needs.

We will work together with our people to provide them with the skills, the support and the structure to navigate future change successfully whilst continuing to ensure they derive both pride and satisfaction from their work.





# G1 Priority areas & Objectives

## G1.01 Cultural Development

At NWLP are deeply committed to cultivating a best-in-class work culture. A successful organisational culture fosters a healthy and cohesive work environment enabling employees to thrive and reach their full potential. Creating a productive and safe work environment is paramount to us, and our values serve as the cornerstone of our culture. We consistently strive to align our actions with these values, ensuring that they guide our behaviour and decision-making processes. By placing patients' health at the heart of our operations, we reinforce our commitment to providing the highest standard of care.

In the first year of our strategic plan, we will prioritise the development of the NWLP behaviours framework. This framework will serve as a guide for our teams, helping them embody our values and exhibit the expected behaviours throughout the organisation. Through active collaboration and engagement, we will work diligently to embed these values and behaviours into the fabric of our organisation.

Our overarching ambition is to create a thriving work environment that resonates with our values and those of our Owner Trusts. By aligning ourselves with the aspirations of our teams and partners, and our shared commitment to public health, we aim to establish an environment that promotes growth, well-being, and excellence.

**Objectives**

1. Embed the values & expected behaviours of the organisation, that are aligned with the Owner Trusts.



## G1.02 Talent Attraction and Retention

The way we deliver our services is always evolving and it is important that we are adaptable and can react to the demands of the Owner Trusts, our stakeholders, the patients and our people. This will require different models of service delivery, reshaping of roles, increased flexibility in the way that we work and development of new skills and competencies.

We recognise that there are areas, which are hard to fill, and one of our strategic objectives is to consider new ways to attract the very best people to NWLP. Our vision is to be an industry leading laboratory diagnostic service and to achieve this ambition we must continue to attract talented and capable team members into our medical, scientific, technical and professional areas.

**Objectives**

1. Develop and implement a future-proof and agile workforce strategy.
2. Employee proposition that supports brand loyalty.
3. Develop a Talent Management programme.
4. Develop and Implement a recruitment and retention package for hard to fill roles.
5. Build on our diverse workforce for bands 8B and above.

We need modern recruitment methods and innovative attraction techniques, working in collaboration with local councils as well as regional, national and overseas campaigns. We are committed to continue to have the right people, with the right skills in the right place at the right time, now and in the future. We are committed to create an environment where our people feel valued and empowered. For our future achievements, we will establish ourselves as a great place to work, attracting, retaining and value the most skilled, diverse and talented people and we will provide opportunities for all those accessing employment, breaking down barriers.

We will do this by understanding what matters most to our people and what they need to deliver safe, patient-focused and expert services.

## G1.03 Training & Development

At NWLP we believe that the development of our workforce provides not only an improvement to our core diagnostic skills, but critically provides the ability to improve our collective problem solving, critical thinking, time and project management alongside increased confidence and application. Empowered leadership sits at our core, as diverse and engaged leadership brings successes throughout the organisation. We are committed to continue the further development of our staff to empower teams with greater leadership and management competency throughout all levels of our workforce, creating a mindset of critical and collaborative thinking.

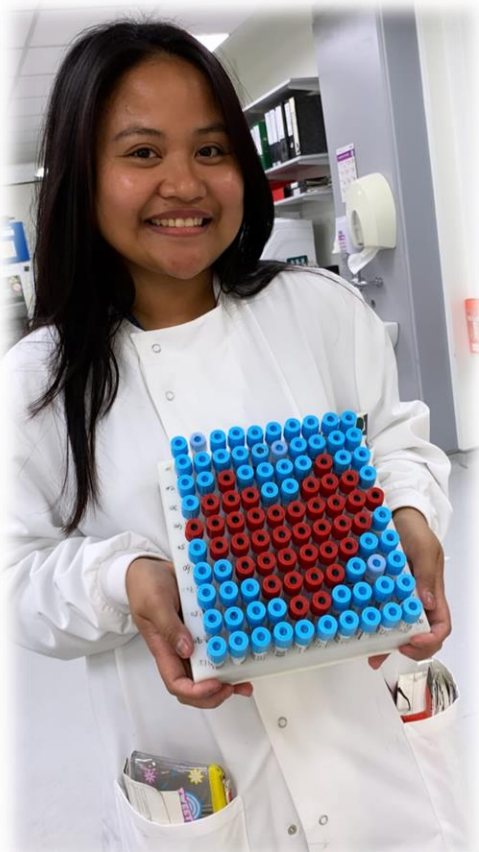
**Objectives**

1. Establish a Leadership & Management Pathway Programme.
2. Develop further and expand our Training Academy.
3. Medical staff involvement in advanced & consultant level training to the organisation.

It is recognised that there are national workforce challenges across the nation in key roles required for clinical laboratory services. NWLP has a good track record of training, and over the next five years we will build upon our knowledge, experience and expertise in training and development. Through the expansion of our training academies and innovative ways to support and deliver training, with development at every level, we will ensure a sustainable workforce of the future.

We will expand our training academy including portfolio schools for scientists supporting clearer routes to registration and enhancing specialist level training. We will continue to promote the development of career pathways for non-scientific roles and provide ease of access to continuing professional development for all. Training across NWLP will feel easy, accessible and enjoyable.

We will continue to challenge operational 'norms' by breaking down barriers between scientific disciplines' using registered staff more appropriately and growing the limit of practice for non-registered staff. Our workforce will be agile and services will be supported to grow with a changing skill-mix where appropriate. Investment in consultant-level and advanced clinical practitioner roles for our senior scientists is heavily supported by our clinical teams.



The national vision of the pathology workforce landscape is changing and by enabling the increasing role of our scientific staff in healthcare brings opportunities for individual career development. NWLP is a flagship for championing good practice as supported by our professional bodies such as the Royal College of Pathologists and the Institute of Biomedical Science.

Working in NWLP means working in an environment where all staff feel they can grow, develop and realise their ambition and potential. We want our staff to feel that they belong within NWLP and as we grow, they grow with us in an environment that is inclusive, represented and aspiring.

## In tune with the ambitions of our people...










## Strategic Goal G2

# Innovation & Technology

**Be at the forefront of diagnostic innovation, by harnessing the latest developments in laboratory medicine to continuously improve patient outcomes.**

**Strategic Ambition:**

NWLP is committed to be at the forefront of diagnostic innovation leveraging the latest developments in laboratory medicine to drive continuous improvement in patient outcomes.

In an ever-evolving field, our dedication to harnessing the power of innovation means we will constantly be exploring cutting-edge techniques and methodologies in laboratory medicine. We will stay abreast of the latest research, advancements in diagnostic equipment, novel testing approaches and industry trends. By integrating innovations into our service, we aim to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and speed of diagnoses, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes.

Within the new NWLP Innovation Hub we will foster an environment of innovation, collaboration and knowledge exchange.

We have started adopting digital technologies to our laboratory services. Through digitisation we will achieve greater efficiency and capability, improve accessibility to expertise and speed of diagnoses, with the aim to ultimately reducing wait times for crucial diagnostic results and improving patient care.

## Priority areas

**To deliver our strategic goal we will focus on the following priority areas:**

- ✓ **G2.01 Innovation & Development**
- ✓ **G2.02 Digital Pathology Toolset**
- ✓ **G2.03 Data Utilisation & Clinical Decision Support- Unlocking the value of Data and Services**
- ✓ **G2.04 Research & Partnership Development**

We will unlock the value of the data we generate by leveraging advanced analytics techniques for valuable insights. We recognise that the application of data analytics and machine learning algorithms to pathology data holds the potential to enable predictive modelling, outcome predictions, and the identification of opportunities for quality improvement in patient care and population health management.

We acknowledge that diagnostic innovation goes beyond simply adopting new technologies. It involves a deep understanding of the clinical implications, the ability to interpret complex data, and the integration of diagnostic results into comprehensive patient care. We will strengthen our collaboration with academic institutions and research organisations to develop new partnerships that will ensure that our diagnostic capabilities are at the forefront of scientific and technological advancements.

Our pursuit of diagnostic innovation is driven by our unwavering dedication to improving patient outcomes and supporting preventative care models. By harnessing the latest developments in laboratory medicine, we aim to not only enhance effectiveness of diagnoses, but also enable early detection, personalised treatment plans, and improved monitoring of patient responses.





# G2 Priority areas & Objectives

## G2.01 Innovation & Development

Our ambition is to establish an Innovation Hub dedicated to driving the discovery, prioritisation, advancement, and evaluation of local development and adoption of innovation, for the purpose of enhancing health outcomes for our diverse population.

Our goal is to foster a collaborative environment that encourages responsible innovation as a process that nurtures creativity and opportunities for scientific development not only to produce understanding, knowledge and value, but with awareness of ethical implications and social impact.

The Hub will provide a thinking space within NWLP to focus on promoting improvement through responsible innovation in products, processes, whilst cultivating social and financial responsibility.

We recognise that innovation is inherently unpredictable and often arises from novel and unexpected combinations, taking various forms. Therefore, we will embrace diversity in our workforce, acknowledging that a range of ideas, opinions, knowledge, and perspectives enriches our work and contributes to our research and innovation system.

**Objectives**

1. Establish the function of an innovation hub in the organisation.




## G2.02 Digital Pathology Toolset

We are committed to leveraging technological advancements to revolutionise our Cellular Pathology tissue-based laboratory services, transforming them into a fully digitised specialty. This strategic shift will bolster our ability to tackle the challenges posed by an increasing workload and limited specialty resources. By embracing digitisation, we will achieve greater efficiency and capability, ultimately reducing wait times for crucial diagnostic results and improving patient care.

Furthermore, the adoption of digital technology will enable remote provision of consultant expertise, enhancing accessibility to specialised knowledge whenever required and offering flexible working options.

The integration of digitised images into our system will allow us to establish a comprehensive repository of information.

**Objectives**

1. Digital Histopathology solution implementation.
2. Introduction of remote capability for digital reporting in Histopathology
3. Introduction of AI in Histopathology.
4. Implement a Digital Haematology solution.

This valuable resource can be harnessed to incorporate artificial intelligence and develop clinical decision support tools, augmenting the diagnostic process and improving patient outcomes. The generated data will contribute to a robust information pool, supporting immediate patient care as well as facilitating wider research within a trusted research environment.

In addition, the introduction of Digital Haematology will ensure real-time utilisation of expertise across the Haematology service, regardless of the sample's location. This advancement will not only benefit patients but also provide staff with enhanced learning and training opportunities across the network, fostering professional growth and expertise sharing.

Through these transformative initiatives, we are poised to optimise our laboratory services, embrace technological innovation, and deliver superior care to our patients while empowering our dedicated staff.



## G2.03 Data Utilisation & Clinical Decision Support. Unlocking the value in our Data and Services

The field of pathology generates vast amounts of data, presenting an opportunity to leverage advanced analytics techniques for valuable insights. Over the next five years, the application of data analytics and machine learning algorithms to pathology data holds the potential to enable predictive modelling, outcome predictions, and the identification of opportunities for quality improvement in healthcare processes.

Diagnostics services can play a role in supporting the NHS to move to a more prevention-focused model, including increasing attention on primary prevention. The integration of Clinical Decision Support tools with patient-specific data and evidence-based medical knowledge can provide real-time recommendations and alerts to healthcare providers. In the context of pathology, these tools can assist pathologists in interpreting test results, offering guidance on diagnosis and treatment options, and even flagging potential errors or inconsistencies in the data.

Furthermore, by harnessing the vast datasets available in pathology and combining them with healthcare data from various sources within a Trusted Research Environment, analytics can then be applied at a population health management level. This approach can facilitate the identification of disease trends, tracking of disease prevalence, and evaluation of the effectiveness of public health interventions. Population health analytics can provide insights into disease patterns, risk factors, and the evolving needs of the local population, thereby informing public health policies and targeted interventions.

**Objectives**

1. Enhance our analytical and data management capabilities within our Informatics and Data Scientist team.
2. Population Health and personal health management. Proactive sharing of data to support clinical decisions and health trending.
3. Enable delivery of data to NWL Owners' Trusted Research Environment (TRE)
4. Agree and establish with Owner Trusts the governance arrangements for data utilisation

NWLP will enable improved clinical decision support with the availability of rich data from our scientific diagnostics service.

We will focus our efforts in the next 5 years to harness image analysis and digital pathology to help automatically analyse digital slides, detect anomalies and expedite diagnosis. We will explore how we can utilise data to provide additional insight and support for personalised medicine by incorporating patient specific information to help assist in optimising patient care. We will investigate how we can exploit these emerging technologies to apply to our population and help identify patients will ill health sooner, working towards a preventative healthcare model.

These new tools will also help support enhanced education and training for staff and new trainees, helping grow the next generation of scientific staff and laboratory leaders.

By embracing data analytics in pathology and leveraging diverse healthcare data sources, we can unlock the potential for transformative advancements in healthcare delivery, improved patient outcomes, and evidence-based decision-making at both individual and population levels.



## G2.04 Research & Partnership Development

Since its formation, NWLP has led an academic and research committee, that incorporates innovation and education. We have developed strategic approaches to strengthen our research underpinning, within our workforce, and at inter-organisational level. In recent years, we have successfully awarded research funds for consumables and resources, providing a unique opportunity for our employees to develop their skills and have earlier access to research. Alongside NWLP research funding, we have maintained NIHR Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) funding, to provide our pathologists with dedicated research time.

Our commitment to research is reflected in our maintenance of academic clinical fellowship posts, some of whom progress to undertake highly competitive research fellowships, including the National Institute for Health and Care Research, (NIHR). We support the development of our academic colleagues, with our NHS Consultant pathologists supported to apply for academic honorary contracts with Imperial College.

We recognise the national and global shortage of the pathology workforce, both scientific and medical, and the diminishing numbers of academic pathologists amongst them. The development of NWLP staff provides, not only an improvement to our core diagnostic skills, but critically provides the ability to improve our collective problem solving, critical thinking, time and project management alongside increased confidence and application.

**Objectives**

1. Review and revise current Research & Innovation structure.
2. Create a single schedule by Research Category and Topic.
3. Definition of research Intellectual Property (IP): ownership, sharing & Legal obligations.
4. Mature relationships and develop marketing of the organisation with Imperial College, AHSC, and Commercial partners to develop growth through research.

We are determined in fostering a culture of innovation and research, across our workforce. Our goal is to quickly and effectively integrate translational research and innovation, into diagnostic laboratory practices, to enable earlier, more accurate diagnosis and treatment.

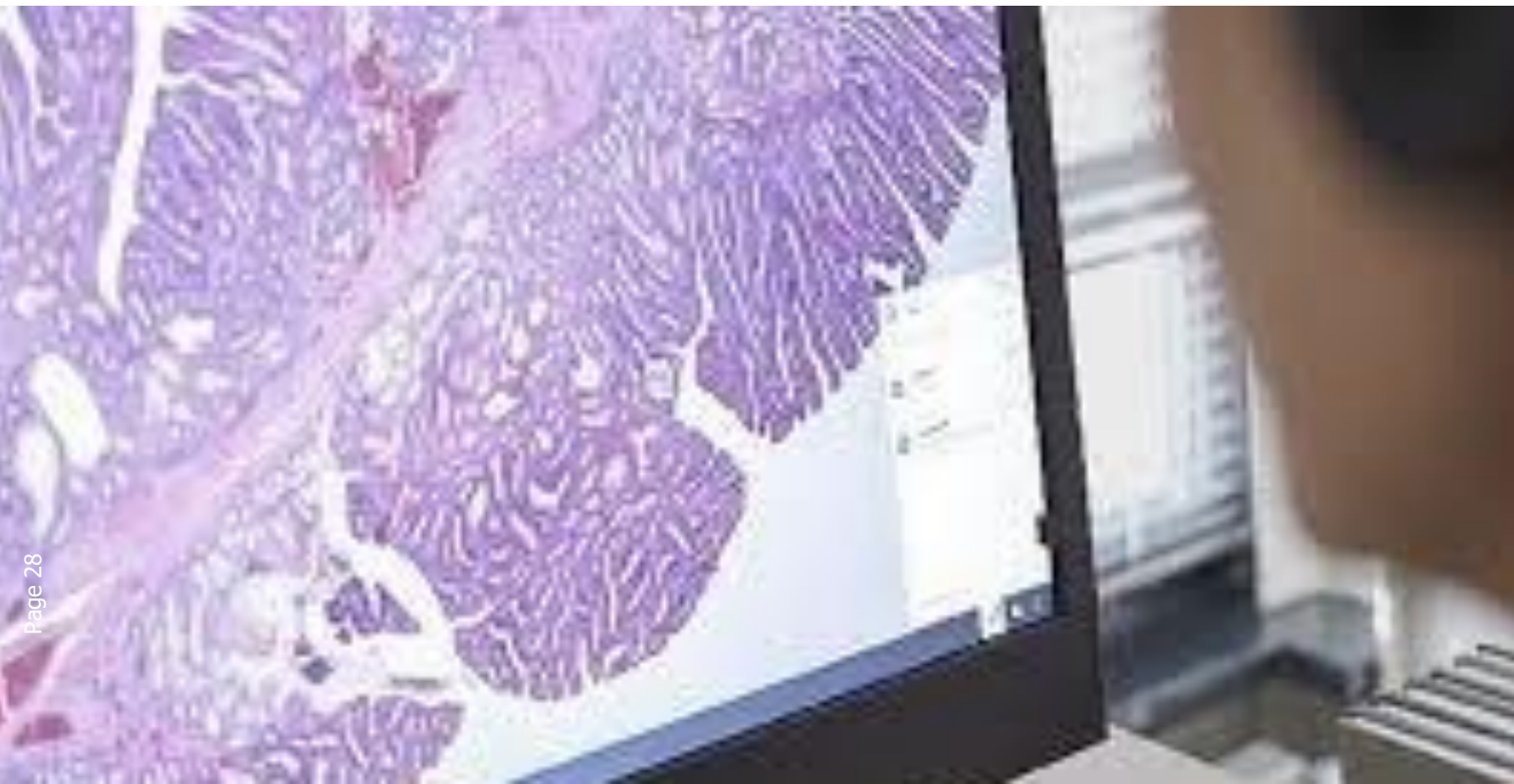
Through the implementation of our strategy, we will review the current function and structure of the research and innovation committee, flexibly adapting it governance, to provide us the opportunity to leverage our capabilities to achieve our research objectives, in the current environment.

Part of the objective of the revised committee will be oversight of a consolidated schedule of the organisations research, inclusive of innovative developments. This will enhance our modelling, planning and adoption of innovation into our services.

Together with our Owners and in partnership with our academic institutions, we will define research intellectual property, gaining clarity on ownership and legal obligations.

We will continue to nurture and develop, existing and new, collaborative relationships with academic organisations, partners and industry. Together, we will work in partnership to support academic enterprises and opportunities for funding to promote and advance academic pathology to the forefront of research.





## Strategic Goal G3

# Operational Excellence & Sustainability

## Establish an environment that fosters a mindset of high performance and enables continuous sustainable improvement

**Strategic Ambition:**
With an ambitious 5-year plan, we shall underpin all activities with sound operational and commercial management, such that these ambitions are realised.
We aspire to move to a new governance model in agreement with our Owner Trusts that will enable a more agile business operation.
Within the next 5 years we will explore the relocation of our central hub laboratories to a new fit for purpose facility that will allow us to achieve our vision and strategic ambitions and in parallel will also support our Owner Trusts with their redevelopment plans across the hospital sites.
Our strategic plan will ensure that operational excellence is the constant driver in the way we operate and that a culture of continuous improvement shall underpin our services and our organisation.
Our strategy supports the NHS ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions. We will commence a number of initiatives with the aim to reduce our carbon footprint and work collaboratively with our Owner Trusts to deliver sustainability targets.
Our strategic plan will also seek to establish a commercial model that is accurate, transparent, equitable and able to support change in future client base and dimension.

### Priority areas

**To deliver our strategic goal we will focus on the following priority areas:**

- ✓ **G3.01 Evolve our corporate governance model**
- ✓ **G3.02 Our Estate: creating a leading Diagnostics Laboratory**
- ✓ **G3.03 Operational Excellence**
- ✓ **G3.04 Green Plan**
- ✓ **G3.05 Commercial enablement**



# G3 Priority areas & Objectives

## G3.01 Evolve our corporate governance model

Our ambitious strategic plan for the next 5 years and the roadmap to achieve our vision, call for different more agile governance model.

The joint venture through the existing Consortium Agreement has the appropriate construct for a governance operating model. During the past years, there was a need to deviate from the agreed construct to meet the requirements of our organisation undergoing a major transformation.

NWLP has successfully delivered on the transformation objectives, creating the largest truly consolidated pathology network in England. Within the first year of our strategy we will propose to our Owner Trusts to adopt the intended construct of the governance model as per the Consortium Agreement, and the establishment of a Board, with full consideration given to an independent Chair or Owner appointed Chair and non-executive directors. This governance will be sustained by creating a feedback loop in which the Board and executive management can identify and respond to business development, operational, competitive, and regulatory needs.

Enabling NWLP to operate in the same way as to an Arms Length Organisation can facilitate our future configuration and intentions. The form of the joint working may be different according to the terms agreed between the partners and as such, there are a number of options available for the Owner Trusts to consider:

1. Contractual joint venture between the Owner Trusts, with shared service provisions, which is the current model under which NWLP is currently operating.
2. Corporate joint venture, involving the formation of a separate legal entity.
3. Hybrid corporate model, involving a corporate joint venture, run in accordance with a contractual agreement.
4. Create a partnership between the three Owner Trusts and a new strategic partner.

We will work with the Owner Trusts to focus on the future inclinations for service provision, and move towards an agreed commercial model from year five of our strategic plan.

**Objectives**

1. Review and revise current governance arrangements with the Owner Trusts.
2. Create the roadmap for NWLP to become an independent organisation.



## G3.02 Our Estate: creating a leading Diagnostics Laboratory

Our estates at the Charing Cross site are presenting our laboratory operations with a constant challenge and pose a risk in the continuity of our service.

The estate that NWLP occupies is a major contributor to the future success of the services we provide and consumes a significant amount of revenue resources. The overarching objective however must always be to provide a safe, flexible, high quality, efficient, effective and sustainable environment from which to deliver laboratory diagnostics. As such, in terms of near term reconfiguration and investment in such a critical aspect, there are three cornerstones that frame the future development:

1. The need to continually improve the delivery of services to Owner Trusts and other customers through development and remodelling.
2. Ensuring that the existing estate is maintained to appropriate standards.
3. Recognising that financial resources, particularly Capital funding, are limited.

Balancing these dimensions is both complex and challenging, particularly when there is significant service change and debate as to how services will be delivered in the context of ever-increasing demands on the laboratories, as well as redevelopment plans being taken forward by the Owner Trusts.

In order to meet the appropriate clinical demand, there will always be a need for the presence of essential laboratory services on each site, co-located within the hospital or in adjacent proximity to ensure diagnostic tests in the acute and urgent setting are provided in a timely fashion. These laboratories will be require to be at the standard to maintain the wide ranging technology and instrumentation as well as the power, temperature and data requirements with room to grow with demand.

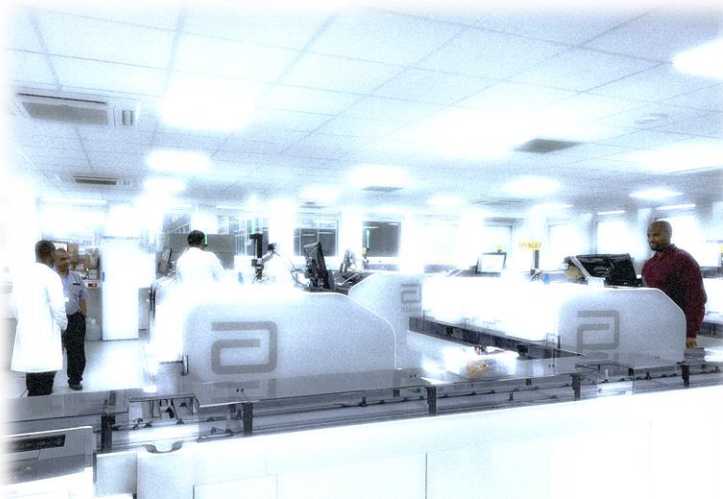
In line with Owner Trust plans and redevelopment of hospitals, it is the right time for NWLP to consider and plan the delivery of 'hub' services in more appropriate, sustainable and future proof premises, enabling the release of much needed clinical space for decant and redevelopment.

Additionally, an investment in our estate will promote improvements to our workforce development, healthcare outcomes, research programmes and growth.

NWLP will need to formally initiate the development of the options appraisal of potential hub configurations and develop the case for this essential change within this five-year plan.

**Objectives**

1. Current Estate Continuity.
2. Develop new Estate feasibility study and production of outline business case.



## G3.03 Operational Excellence

With operational excellence at the core of our service model, we will continue to ensure that our operational and clinical services are underpinned with our culture of continuous improvement.

The field of diagnostics is constantly evolving and as a dynamic and agile organisation at the forefront of laboratory services, we are committed to responding to the changing landscape, embracing challenges and seizing opportunities that arise.

Our primary objective is to deliver first class diagnostic laboratory services leveraging our scientific and clinical expertise across 23 specialist areas. However, it is imperative that we continually assess our clinical, operational and financial practices to ensure that our services remain effective and responsive to the needs of our patients.

We will challenge conventional approaches and foster a culture of continuous improvement, transcending boundaries through regular reviews and optimisations. Our mindset of continuous improvement will be supported by our well-established performance improvement and project portfolio office. We will strive to enhance value and efficiency by identifying superior methods and eliminating unnecessary complexities within our organisation. Moreover, we will ensure that our services align with evolving clinical guidelines, prioritising quality to meet the requirements of our accreditation and governing bodies.

Nurturing strong relationships with our key suppliers is important to us. Through strategic partnerships, we aim to amplify opportunities in healthcare. Enhancing our commercial acumen in partnership with leading laboratory diagnostic companies will drive growth across our sector and ensure sustainability of our operational excellence.

As we develop leadership and management competencies throughout our organisation, operational excellence necessitates the integration of a culture ingrained in sound financial responsibility and business acumen at all levels.

We envision operational excellence as a shared goal for all our staff, empowering individuals to take ownership of their work and make meaningful contributions to NWLP. To achieve this, we purposefully choose to equip our teams with comprehensive training and tools, empowering them to challenge our operating models and drive performance improvement in a manner that feels attainable. By doing so, we will ensure that NWLP remains at the forefront of clinical diagnostics.

**Objectives**

1. Review and revise functions and processes of the organisation to deliver our vision.
2. Optimisation of process & practices for sustained high performance.
3. Continuous Improvement.
4. Build strong partnerships with key suppliers and strong contract management that will promote growth and maintain operational excellence.
5. Embed strong financial responsibility principles across all levels in the organisation.



## G3.04 Green Plan

NWLP is fully committed to minimising its environmental impact in the future. One of our aims is to transition to a paperless service within the next few years. To achieve this, we have already initiated various measures, such as pass-through numbering, which is being piloted this year. This initiative aims to reduce the need for paper requests that accompany specimens.

Furthermore, we recognise the significance of reducing plastic usage within our service. Consequently, we are actively exploring alternatives to plastic bags, such as specimen transportation racks. By implementing these options, we can significantly decrease our reliance on plastic.

Additionally, we are investigating the feasibility of utilising reusable waste containers as part of our broader green initiatives. This initiative underscores our commitment to finding sustainable solutions in waste management.

Collaboration with our suppliers is crucial in achieving our environmental objectives. We will work closely with them to explore innovative approaches that reduce our overall environmental impact.

Our comprehensive green plan will encompass multiple areas, including transportation, waste reduction, energy efficiency, water conservation, sustainable procurement, and green chemistry. Through these focus areas, we aim to create a holistic approach that promotes sustainability across all aspects of our operations.

**Objectives**

1. Develop a Green plan in conjunction with our owner Trusts.
2. Implement a portfolio of environmental initiatives.



## G3.05 Commercial enablement

We will enhance our operating model towards an execution-focused operational design that activates and delivers on our business strategy.

Our intention is not on organisational redesign but on teaming together through more customer-centric goals, roles, and processes. Our customers and ultimately, the customer experience are one of the focal points of our strategy.

NWLP will focus on commercial enablement through:

- More business orientated impact, evolving the service functions that will enable the organisation to transform the customer experience.
- More efficient processes to improve the repeatability and consistency of essential processes, to ensure value-added contributions by all team members aligned to customer-facing, revenue-generating teams.
- Better and faster outputs that will help leaders and teams transform and re-engineer the way they approach their value contribution by creating updating, and delivering outputs faster, more consistently.
- Improved partnership with internal divisional leads to improve and tighten the collaboration and integration with internal leaders and partners.
- Coordinated business development to accelerate the consideration of pipeline activities and fast track decision making to enable growth and commercial development.

**Objectives**

1. Evolve Price/Test Billing Model.
2. Improve commercial support in customer and supplier relationships.



## Strategic Goal G4

# Growth & Customers

**Advance our market position as a leading provider of laboratory medicine by offering an attractive customer proposition.**

**Strategic Ambition:**
Growth is crucial for the long-term success of our services, as it will enable us to acquire assets, attract new talent and fund investments. It will also drive business performance and benefits for the Owner Trusts. Within the next 5 years we will:

- take advantage of new opportunities
- expand our products and services
- attract more customers
- increase revenue

We will be able to respond to market demand, increase market share and capitalise on our growing brand.

Our services are well positioned to focus on opportunities that delve into understanding the needs and priorities of our existing customers. This approach will allow us to develop new services while also focusing on effective segmentation and diversification by reaching new markets to deliver diagnostic laboratory services.

As a thriving pathology network, we have successfully delivered the intended benefits as set out by NHSE and the various national reviews of pathology services.

## Priority areas

**To deliver our strategic goal we will focus on the following priority areas:**

- ✓ **G4.01 Brand & Identity**
- ✓ **G4.02 Excellence in Customer Care**
- ✓ **G4.03 Availability of Products & Services to a broader client portfolio**

NWLP is strategically positioned to spearhead the way forward and move towards the creation of a super network in London, creating new enhanced strategic partnerships to further improve and deliver efficiency.

We will assess these opportunities through the lens of value creation to build sustainable success.

# G4 Priority areas & Objectives

## G4.01 Brand & Identity

Our renewed vision, our organisational values and our strategic ambitions for the future call for a strong brand identity that resonates with our employees and our customers and creates a loyal workforce and customer base.

With the explosion of new media and different digital approaches, understanding our brand and making the right choices has become increasingly important. To achieve this, we will leverage our extensive internal data, complemented by user surveys and a comprehensive understanding of the market landscape.

Our focus will be on refining our positioning and effectively executing our strategic goals. By gaining valuable insights that enhance the positioning of our services brand, we will actively engage with our people through organisational development initiatives, while also capturing a larger market share by identifying and capitalising on refined opportunities.

Our data-driven approach will enable us to develop a robust communications strategy that prioritises what matters most to our service users, while simultaneously optimising value creation for both them and our Owner Trusts.

Furthermore, we recognise the importance of storytelling in our brand narrative. By sharing the background of our journey and explaining how we have evolved, we will enhance understanding of our achievements and expertise in delivering for the future. This approach will not only create a sense of belonging among our people but also further strengthen our ability to execute on our workforce strategy, fostering a culture of high-performance and dedication.

**Objectives**

1. Promote our Brand & Identity to reflect our new vision.



## G4.02 Excellence in Customer care

NWLP is committed to be a customer-focused organisation that consistently delivers outstanding service and exceeds customer expectations.

We firmly believe that effective and efficient service delivery is vital for the sustainability of our long-term plans. To achieve this, we have adopted a values-based approach and established clear expectations of behaviours at all levels of the organisation, supported by customer care training for our staff.

Creating a customer-centric culture throughout our organisation is paramount for all our internal and external interactions. Fostering good internal customer service between our teams, sets the foundation for staff who deal directly with external colleagues, customers and service users and is directly linked to our cultural ambition of creating an organisation in which improvement through listening and action is ingrained in our everyday operations.

We aim to instil a customer-focused mindset across the organisation, emphasising the importance of meeting customer expectations at every touchpoint. As part of our strategy, we intend to establish a new customer service team in the organisation with the right people and systems to provide outstanding customer care. With comprehensive training, we will ensure that our customer care representatives are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and empathy to handle customer inquiries effectively. We will implement tools to measure and monitor customer satisfaction to identify areas of improvement. We will enhance and expand our communication channels to offer customers multiple options making it easier for customers to connect with us and receive the support they require.

Ultimately, our strategic ambition is to establish a renowned reputation for delivering exceptional customer care, fostering customer loyalty, and contributing to the long-term success and growth of our organisation.

**Objectives**

1. Develop a Customer-Centric Culture
2. Establish a Customer Services function
3. Optimise customer communication channels





## G4.03 Availability of Products & Services to a broader client portfolio

At NWLP we are determined to be closer and more responsive to our service users and customers. Recognising the increasing demand from users for direct access to laboratory diagnostics, we aim to ensure our services are easily accessible to our customers.

Enhanced phlebotomy services and the introduction of web-based order access will bring our services closer to our users.

By empowering our employees to respond to new growth opportunities, we will further improve access to our services and engage our entire workforce in the customer journey. This approach fosters a customer-centric culture and enables us to provide exceptional service to our customers and service users

As part of our future growth strategy, we will explore opportunities to invest in innovative products and services. Additionally, we will expand our reach into markets, which are new to NWLP and unconventional for the NHS; that have clear synergies with our existing service. These initiatives will enable us to meet evolving customer needs and increase our market presence.

Improved access and a broader service offering will allow us to diversify our customer base, thereby driving increased revenue and making a greater contribution to NHS funds. We will actively explore alternative markets, such as veterinary, environmental, and occupational health services. Furthermore, we will develop specialised offerings for private healthcare and overseas customers to expand our market reach.

By implementing these initiatives as part of our strategic plan, we aim to strengthen our position in the market, meet the growing demand for laboratory diagnostics, and provide enhanced value to a wider range of customers. Our focus on innovation, employee engagement, and market diversification will contribute to the financial sustainability of NWLP and enable us to serve a broader client portfolio effectively.

**Objectives**

1. Improve accessibility to our services
2. Diversification of services
3. Explore & secure new market opportunities.



# 7.
# How we will develop as an organisation

Our strategic ambition at North West London Pathology is to become a leading centre of excellence in diagnostic services whilst driving technological advances, and promoting research and innovation. By leveraging our expertise, embracing cutting-edge technologies, and fostering collaboration, we aim to deliver efficient and accurate laboratory diagnostics, and contribute to improved patient outcomes.

In the next 5 years we will continually improve diagnostic excellence by implementing cutting-edge technologies, fostering a culture of innovation, and investing in the ongoing professional development for our people.

We will optimise our diagnostic capabilities by embracing emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digital pathology. Our ambition is to leverage data-driven insights and predictive analytics to enable early disease detection, risk assessment, and tailored treatment strategies.

We will foster collaboration with academic institutions and industry partners to conduct research and develop new diagnostic tests, methodologies, and treatment monitoring techniques.



We will remain committed to developing and nurturing a highly skilled workforce. Through continuous education and training programmes, we will empower our staff to remain at the forefront of pathology advancements. We will provide opportunities for professional growth and development, knowledge sharing, and participation in research activities. By attracting and retaining top talent, we will maintain excellence in our services and drive innovation.

We will stay agile, anticipate industry trends, and be proactive in meeting the evolving needs of the healthcare landscape. We will remain alert to emerging diagnostic tests and techniques and invest in the necessary infrastructure and expertise to offer them.

We will become a sustainable organisation by implementing environmentally friendly practices to minimise the organisation's ecological footprint.

We will build a strong brand and identity and implement effective marketing and sales strategies. We will leverage digital marketing channels, increase our presence to conferences and events to promote our brand and our services.

As part of our future growth plans we will explore opportunities for diversification, expansion of services, and new partnerships. We aspire to strengthen our presence in the private market as well as 'direct to consumer' testing. Additionally we will explore diagnostic testing in other areas such as environmental and veterinary.

To meet our future ambitions as an organisation, we must foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, embrace agility, manage talent, encourage innovation, leverage technology, and forge strategic collaborations.

By enacting our strategy, we will navigate the ever-evolving market landscape, drive growth, and position ourselves as a dynamic and adaptable organisation poised for long-term success.

## To deliver our ambition we will....

- ✓ Evolve our governance model so that we become more agile as an organisation.
- ✓ Design and resource our organisation to be better equipped and effective to our future ambitions.
- ✓ Attract, develop, retain, and celebrate diverse, highly motivated and talented employees.
- ✓ Develop our work environment to foster a positive, inclusive culture in which people are empowered and performance can flourish.
- ✓ Enhance our digital, analytical and data management capabilities to enable data utilisation to enhance patient outcomes.
- ✓ Invest in outstanding digital, information management and technology that are interoperable and that will harness artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- ✓ Promote and enable research and innovation.
- ✓ Communicate and enhance our strategic engagement to support collaboration and build new partnerships.
- ✓ Scale up our engagement with existing and new partners to achieve best outcomes.
- ✓ Embed a continuous improvement approach.
- ✓ Apply strategic communications and marketing approaches to help strengthen our brand and deliver our renewed vision.
- ✓ Establish a business development function to identify and secure new sources of income and respond to new opportunities.
- ✓ Diversify and expand our diagnostic services.
- ✓ Adopt sustainable practices to reduce our environmental impact.



# 8.
# Next steps

A successful strategy is ultimately assessed by the effectiveness in its implementation. Our strategy, although ambitious, is both attainable and meaningful to our stakeholders, including our people, Owner Trusts, partners, and service users.

To achieve our strategic objectives, we will execute a range of projects, activities and initiatives at strategic and tactical levels. We will communicate our strategy and objectives to all relevant stakeholders, internally and externally ensuring their understanding and commitment. We will work collaboratively with our colleagues and partners to translate our strategic objectives into well-defined initiatives and projects that will enable us to fulfil our strategic ambitions.

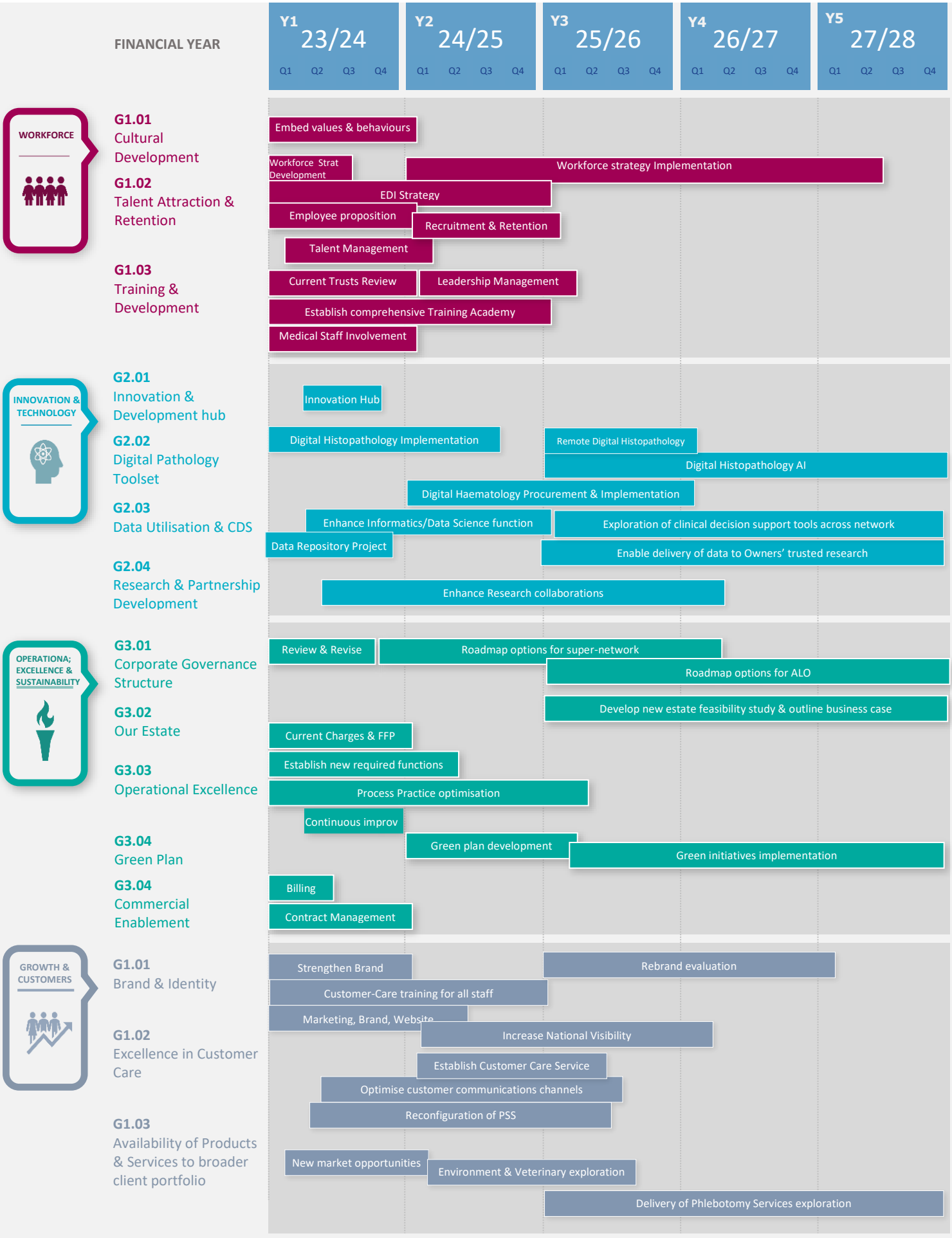
To drive the execution of our strategy, we will develop a comprehensive implementation plan that will outline the key deliverables, assign responsibilities, and set realistic timelines. We will monitor progress regularly and make adjustments as necessary. Our aim is to foster a culture of collaboration and accountability to ensure everyone is aligned and working towards our strategic goals. Our strategic plan will be integrated into our business planning, as well as the continuous improvement, quality, and performance management frameworks. Over the next five years, we will diligently implement this plan, leveraging it to guide our actions.

We have already formulated a high-level strategic roadmap for the upcoming five years, outlining critical projects and initiatives that are essential to our success.

It is important to note that our strategy is not a static document, but a living one. It will serve as a foundation for key decision-making processes, influencing how we prioritise projects and improvement initiatives while making efficient use of our resources. In order to maintain our agility and adaptability, we will proactively monitor changes in the diagnostics sector and update our strategy as necessary to ensure a continued relevance, validity, and responsiveness.



# Strategic Roadmap



North West
London Pathology

www.nwlpathology.nhs.uk

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