



**NHS North Essex**

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Dear Colleague

## **CHANGES TO LOCAL PATHOLOGY SERVICES**

As part of a bigger project across the whole of the East of England, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Essex have recommended the redesign of certain pathology services. This follows an East of England service design programme, which subject to contract, will concentrate routine GP tests in fewer laboratories to maximise expertise, economies of scale and maintenance of high quality standards. At a time of significant financial pressures in the NHS, this would relieve such pressure for commissioners whilst maintaining and providing a high quality service.

Tests carried out in hospitals as either inpatients, outpatients or urgent requested by GPs or A&E will continue to be analysed in local hospitals as before.

These proposals are subject to a contract which will require a number of conditions to be met to assure GPs and CCGs about the quality, logistics and effectiveness of the proposed new system. These conditions have already been the subject of a dialogue over several months.

A contract will not be signed unless the CCGs have total confidence and assurance that the new service is fully compliant with required quality standards, financial requirements and other conditions. CCGs in Essex will be involving their lay members on the CCG Board and their patient involvement groups in the final decision.

If commissioners are satisfied that the new service is fully compliant with required quality standards, financial requirements and other conditions, the contract will be signed by each CCG in Essex. Suitable arrangements will then be put in place to ensure that the new provider can meet all requirements set out within the contract.

As you can see from the above, there is a significant amount of detail and local assurance needed before CCGs and the PCT Cluster Board can agree to this contract being signed. We would like to reassure local residents that there are many notable service and clinical benefits arising from this proposed change in service. These include increased opening hours to meet more effectively the needs of clinicians and their patients, electronic tracking of samples, a rigorous monthly monitoring regime and financial savings for both patients and tax payers.

I hope the above is helpful

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Pike', with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

Andrew Pike  
Chief Executive, NHS North Essex