

# What next?

We will be providing regular updates and newsletters as the project develops, and in early 2009 we will be holding a number of workshops – where we will be seeking input and views from a variety of stakeholders to help shape the project. Attendance will be by invitation, but expressions of interest to [pathology.modernisation@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pathology.modernisation@dh.gsi.gov.uk) would be welcomed.



"The Department of Health e-LfH programme is primarily focused on developing postgraduate e-learning for the clinical workforce and has been described as the most positive development in medical education in 20 years by the Chief Medical Officer (for England). e-LfH is delighted to now be working with the Department of Health Pathology team, United Kingdom Accreditation Service and Skills for Health to produce e-learning to support the National Standard of Excellence in Point-of-Care Testing and accreditation programme."

**Alan Ryan**  
National e-Learning  
Programme Director  
e-Learning for Healthcare



"Accreditation has an important role to play in providing independent and impartial confirmation of the competence of POCT providers, irrespective of where and by whom the service is provided. By assuring patient safety and stakeholder protection, accreditation helps to fulfil a higher duty of care."

**Jane Beaumont**  
Director of Accreditation  
UKAS



"Skills for Health are delighted to participate in this programme as the development of a national competence framework will align the POCT guidelines with measurable practice standards and recognise transferable skills."

**Robert Standfield**  
Divisional Manager  
Practice Development  
Skills for Health



## Point-of-Care Testing

The Department of Health is developing an accreditation system for pathology point-of-care testing (POCT), in order to improve quality assurance in this area. An increasing amount of pathology testing is being carried out at the point of care, with more and more tests being done in GP practices, high street pharmacies, retail outlets, ambulances and other settings outside of hospitals.

To keep up with this change in practice the Department of Health is working with the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), Skills for Health and e-Learning for Healthcare to develop a flexible and robust accreditation service for POCT.

The three main elements of the work are around accreditation, competence and the development of learning materials.

## In the first instance, the project will focus on point-of-care tests such as:

- prothrombin/international normalised ratio (INR)
- glucose
- cholesterol
- brain natriuretic peptide (BNP).



"As the Department of Health's National Clinical Lead for Pathology, I am very pleased to support this project. It is important for patients and the public to be able to have confidence in pathology testing, wherever it is carried out. Healthcare is changing rapidly and diagnostic services are changing too. So it is vital that we have an accreditation system that supports new ways of providing care for patients."

**Ian Barnes**  
National Clinical Lead  
for Pathology  
Department of Health

## The project's key objectives are:

- to define a set of competences for POCT practitioners;
- to develop approaches that will assess the competence of the individuals, organisations, networks or other arrangements that deliver POCT;
- to ensure that the assessment and accreditation approaches are designed to be capable of responding to changes in the nature, scope and delivery of POCT;
- to ensure that assessment and accreditation approaches to POCT will work whether carried out in the public or private sectors;
- to encourage confidence in the accuracy, reliability and validity of the results for those who use POCT;
- to create the e-learning materials that will equip organisations and individuals with the skills to carry out POCT to the standards and competences defined by the assessment and accreditation approaches; and
- to pilot, validate, implement, roll out and support access to the training and accreditation product for its various audiences and user groups in their locations, as required.

## Organisations we will be working with include the following:

Ambulance Service Association  
Association of British Healthcare Industries  
Association for Clinical Biochemistry  
Association of Clinical Pathologists  
British In Vitro Diagnostics Association  
British Medical Association  
British Society for Haematology  
Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd  
Healthcare Commission  
Health Protection Agency  
Inspector of Microbiology  
Institute of Biomedical Science  
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency  
National Association of Primary Care  
National Patient Safety Agency  
National Pharmacy Association  
NHS Alliance  
Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee  
Primary Care Contracting  
Royal College of General Practitioners  
Royal College of Nursing  
Royal College of Pathologists  
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain