

# National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue

## Gifford Batstone

The National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue (NLMC) is a standardised list of pathology test requests validated for use within the NHS. Each request item in the NLMC has a number of core data attributes which uniquely define the request. These form the NLMC core dataset. The NLMC core dataset content is system independent and applicable to the design and implementation of any electronic pathology order communications solution utilising a “*Do once and share*” approach.

The core NLMC dataset currently includes the fully defined test request name, the test request display name, alternative test request display names, request SNOMED-CT code, valid specimen types and options to indicate the requirement for additional specimen laterality, topography and morphology information as part of a request.

The NLMC and quality assurance of its content is maintained through a governance process hosted by the Royal College of Pathologists on behalf of the NHS. The contracted ownership of the NLMC and its content rests with the Department of Health.

The core NLMC dataset is inherited by a number of external datasets that facilitate configuration and deployment of specific electronic solutions most notably for Lorenzo, Cerner and the GP electronic order communications early adopters.

At deployment each organisation can choose which NLMC test requests to make visible to requesting clinicians as part of the local pathology services provided.

The immediate aims of the NLMC Governance Board are:

- To deliver a standardised comprehensive list of valid pathology test requests devoid of duplicates and out-moded tests through application of a set of editorial principles.
- To agree default units of measurement for uptake throughout the NHS.
- Ensure the availability of the NLMC content for use as part of all NHS pathology order communications deployments.

The longer term aims of NLMC Governance Board are:

- Expansion of the NLMC dataset to include the definition of key result attributes associated with request items
- To take the NLMC through the various phases of activity that will lead to its acceptance by the Information Standards Board
- To link with the diagnostic test evaluation process being developed by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence to ensure only validated new pathology tests are added to the NLMC.
- To link with work on harmonisation of reference ranges in order that these are incorporated within NLMC,
- To link with the knowledge base for pathology being developed through Department of Health projects to enable intelligent requesting and interpretation of results.
- To enable the combination of data from different laboratories into a single record in formats which consistent and safe.
- To use the NLMC as a pivot to point to and from other sources of investigation related information as used by NHS Evidence, Map of Medicine, LabTestsOnline and Better Testing

To ensure these aims the Department of Health (DH) together with NHS Connecting for Health have worked closely with the Royal College of Pathologists to agree a contracted process of governance and quality assurance for the core NLMC dataset. The process requires engagement with all relevant professional bodies, UK Terminology Centre, industry and patient stakeholders. Key appointments for this work have been made and the NLMC Board held its first meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2009.