

Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) initial statement on Lord Carter of Coles' *Review of Operational Productivity and Performance in English NHS Acute Hospitals: Unwarranted Variations*

The IBMS welcomes opportunities for the NHS in England to make productivity gains and financial savings through improved efficiency, however, our focus must remain on supporting our members in delivering a safe, high quality pathology service.

The delivery of efficiency savings, whether through targets for Trust expenditure on pathology services or through further consolidation or outsourcing, should not compromise the essential work our members are currently engaged in to support the quality agenda; working towards achieving ISO15189 standards and recruiting and retaining an appropriate staffing mix.

Specialist pathology services, which by their nature will often incur higher costs, may be particularly vulnerable when Trusts look to achieve cost savings in pathology. Trusts should not allow the provision or quality of specialist to be impacted when making efficiency savings in the provision of pathology services.

Lord Carter's Review concludes that consolidated pathology services are the most efficient in the NHS in England. However, while reorganisation of pathology services may eventually save costs through improved efficiency, consolidating pathology services without the appropriate infrastructure investment has produced mixed results. We will continue to support our members whose services are currently undergoing, or have recently undergone, reorganisation by providing support and guidance, encouraging collaboration and supporting the sharing of best practice.

The introduction of the Pathology Quality Assurance Dashboard offers an opportunity to enhance quality and safety across NHS pathology services through benchmarking. However, for the proposed Dashboard to be an effective tool, we must work with our members, the Royal College of Pathologists, the Association of Clinical Biochemists & Laboratory Medicine and NHS England to ensure that the metrics used are relevant, appropriate and that data in the dashboard is accurate, fit-for-purpose and collected and analysed in a consistent manner.

We have supported a number of initiatives which have worked towards closer harmonisation in pathology, including the National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue and National Minimum Retesting Intervals in Pathology, and will support the Health and Social Care Information Centre going forward in developing and publishing a definitive list of NHS pathology tests.

We will ensure that our members are aware of the recommendations of Lord Carter's Review and will deliver guidance and services to support our members in meeting the recommendations set out in the Review.