



# The Association for Clinical Biochemistry

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Qualified Support for the Carter Report on Pathology Services

The Association for Clinical Biochemistry welcomes Lord Carter's second stage review of Pathology Services in England and Wales. We recognise that delays have been necessary to consolidate the report with the work associated with Lord Darzi's well publicised reports. We agree with the bulk of Lord Carter's recommendations and recognise the supportive tone of the Department of Health's response.

The Association wholeheartedly supports Lord Carter's emphasis on quality with a patient focus on service delivery, which we have always promoted. This includes provision of tests near to the patient, enhancing patient convenience, but recognising that they must be carried out to appropriate quality, as affirmed by the Department of Health. We therefore endorse the recommendation for mandatory accreditation of such testing.

The recommendation on Information Technology connectivity is particularly welcome so that the results of the tests can be recorded and made available alongside all other results for the same patient.

Providing the knowledge to interpret the result is a key factor. To supplement the skills offered by Clinical Scientists in this regard, the website "Lab Tests on Line"<sup>1</sup> (introduced into the UK and hosted by the Association) is recognised as an excellent resource available to patients and healthcare professionals alike.

The appointment of a National Clinical Director for Pathology will enable engagement with other National Clinical Directors, helping to join up service improvements across the Health Service.

We agree with the Department of Health led Workforce reform being delivered through “Modernising Scientific Careers” which we believe will result in a flexible and appropriate workforce.

We are also actively supporting the proposal to develop a formulary of tests, which will help doctors to choose the best tests to diagnose patients’ illnesses and monitor their progress and treatment.

While we broadly welcome Lord Carter’s recommendations there are some that require an understanding of the financial and organisational constraints. We recommend appropriate dialogue at the Department of Health and at Strategic Health Authority (SHA), structured to obtain best practice advice from senior innovative thinkers from within the profession. We believe there is a need for a credible, experienced Pathology Lead in each SHA to ensure that Primary Care Trusts and Commissioners understand the nature of the services proposed. This will ensure effective implementation of the report’s recommendations.

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President, Association for Clinical Biochemistry

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Notes for Editors:

<sup>1</sup>Lab Tests on Line – [www.labtestsonline.org.uk](http://www.labtestsonline.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup>The ACB’s formal response to the report has been published on its website: [www.acb.org.uk](http://www.acb.org.uk)

*Clinical Biochemistry is the clinical science of examining blood and other fluids to diagnose and monitor disease and inform therapy.*

*The Association for Clinical Biochemistry (ACB), founded in 1953, is a professional body dedicated to the practice and promotion of clinical science and laboratory medicine and has medical and non-medical members in all major UK healthcare laboratories, many university departments and several commercial companies. It has a relationship with the clinical diagnostics industry through links with its Corporate Members. The Association liaises with, and is consulted by, many national and international organisations on issues relating to Clinical Biochemistry. It was instrumental in establishing accreditation for clinical scientists in all disciplines and administers accreditation in all disciplines through the Association of Clinical Scientists. It also plays a significant role in the training of Clinical Scientists in the Biochemistry discipline and its training framework is used by other disciplines.*

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