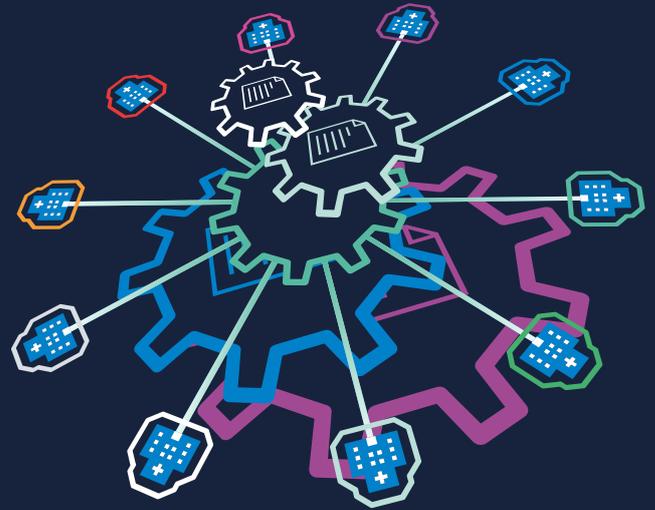


# NPEx Newsletter

April 2019 - Issue 12



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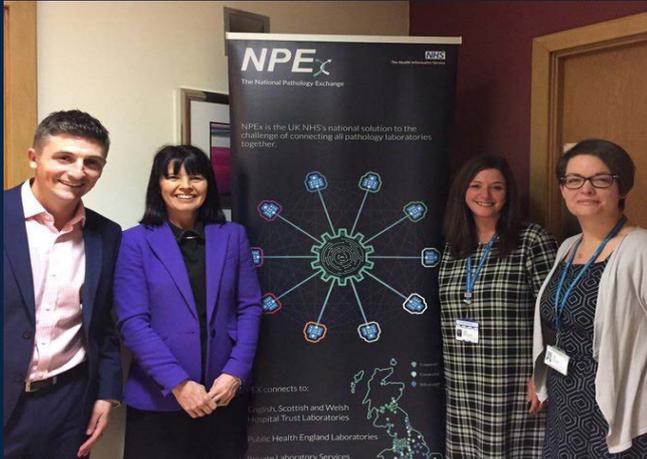
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Are you on our mailing list? If you didn't receive this newsletter from the THIS Service Desk, please let us know via [npex@x-labsystems.co.uk](mailto:npex@x-labsystems.co.uk) so we can add you to our list.

# 1

## NPEx Scotland Roadshow



On Wednesday 27th March, members of the NPEx team from both X-Lab and The Health Informatics Service (THIS) met with NHS Scotland's National Laboratories Programme team and Scottish users for the NPEx Scotland Roadshow in Glasgow. As NPEx's Scottish rollout gains momentum, the day's themes were collaboration, communication and motivation. With representatives from most of Scotland's regional Health Boards, this was a key opportunity to explore how NPEx can support the National Laboratories Programme's objectives of working directly with labs to develop pan-Scotland efficiency, effectiveness, equitability, resilience and affordability using technology.

Speaking with Jennifer Downie, the Project Support Officer for the National Laboratories Programme, she said: 'The NPEx Scotland Roadshow's many presentations were of a high quality and covered technical updates; NPEx moving forward; and success stories. This laid foundations for the afternoon's interactive sessions where people were able to express their

ideas and ask questions. Everyone seemed really engaged with the discussions all day long.'

Charlotte Syme, the Programme's Deputy Clinical Lead, who is also a Clinical Scientist at Glasgow Royal Infirmary and uses NPEx in her day-to-day role, told us that: 'This event was filled with questions and engagement. The sheer amount of discussion that has arisen between the NPEx team and Scottish users just shows how useful people have found this. The event provided valuable and dedicated time to think about NPEx, its implementation and the benefits Scotland could experience. It's easy to get bogged-down in our day-to-day work but when you've got a day-long event where everybody shares an interest in the same issues, we can be focussed, share knowledge and get motivated and start working on NPEx.'

The Programme's Manager, Kim Walker, emphasised the importance of communicating directly with those who will use NPEx: 'For us as a Programme, I think the benefit of having this event is that Scottish users get to hear directly from the supplier about how NPEx works on a practical level, what benefits can be gained by it and how it fits into the wider context of the NHS's objectives. This dedicated time has really opened up discussions about how NPEx can work best for individual labs which will contribute to meeting the Programme's objectives at a national level.'

Part of this collaborative and communicative ethos came from the wide range of speakers who attended the day. Particularly, Robin Lythe, Chief Biomedical Scientist and IT Lead in the

Immunology Department at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, shared his lab's NPEX success story with our Scottish users: 'I delivered a presentation as a long-term user of NPEX across Greater Manchester. In my lab we began our NPEX journey in 2010 and, having benefited from the solution for nearly a decade, the region has undergone an amazing change. I wanted to share the experience of regional deployment and using NPEX with Scottish users as they undergo their rollout. I think it's valuable to share knowledge and these events provide the space to share experiences, challenges and successes with users and NPEX team-members alike.'

Mandy Griffin, Managing Director of THIS, emphasised: 'If we are determined to expand NPEX across the whole of the UK and further afield, we need to make ourselves accessible to our customers. Being in Scotland is part of that and it's important to make events like this frequent and engaging as our user-base grows. These events are not just beneficial to users but for members of the NPEX team, like myself, to use this opportunity to unite technical perspectives with a business understanding and overview of what's happening on-the-ground with NPEX.'

Steve Box, Business Development Director at X-Lab, talked about this in terms of the NPEX Scotland rollout: 'The NPEX Scotland Roadshow was a constructive day. We had representation from every Health Board in Scotland which led to some key discussions about collaboration and how it can provide a benefit across Scotland. Events like this

to bring everyone together; just by getting people in the same room, providing the time for networking and knowledge sharing, they energise users and the NPEX team to make progress and build relationships for development.'

The power of meeting face-to-face is important for enacting the collaborative ethos of NPEX. Debbie Hunter, Head of Service for NPEX at THIS, explained: 'In today's world we depend too much on electronic communication, like emailing and WebEx meetings. Making the effort to meet people face-to-face allows our customers to put faces to the names of the NPEX team. This is invaluable as it improves the collaborative relationships upon which NPEX, and its ethos, is built; as the solution grows we need to remain present and provide the opportunity for users to ask us questions so they can gain as much as possible from NPEX.'

Thank you to all the users and speakers who attended the NPEX Scotland Roadshow and contributed to an insightful and progressive event. In particular, we are grateful to our guest speakers: Robin Lythe, Chief Biomedical Scientist and IT Lead at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust; Terry Fairbain, Biomedical Scientist in Blood Sciences at NHS Borders; Richard McEwan, IT Specialist Advisor; and Dennis Betts, eHealth Regional Shared Services Programme Manager for West of Scotland NHS GG&C.

To read more about the National Laboratories Programme, visit their new website [here](#).

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## 2

# NPEx and Source BioScience



Image: Source BioScience

In the final quarter of this financial year, NPEx has engaged in an exciting collaboration with Source BioScience Pathology Services, part of the Source BioScience UK Ltd Group (SBS). SBS are the UK's leading Cellular Pathology Services Provider and have been operating internationally over the past 20 years with over 65 consultant pathologists. The company work in partnership with Cellular Pathology Departments across the NHS and private hospitals where they have a reputation for putting patients first when providing life-changing test results.

From investing £1,000,000 in their Nottingham facility in 2018 to employing former NHS staff who are experts in the complexities of producing fast results, SBS have demonstrated their strong drive for improving the cancer diagnosis process through a network of working partnerships with labs across the UK and Europe. Their laboratories have expanded as a result of this investment to adjust to the increasing client list and work they receive which additionally has laid the foundations for future growth. Technology is at the heart of

this investment with the acquisition of Digital Pathology equipment; this has enabled SBS to deliver the next generation of transporting slide images to fast reporting and driving down the turnaround time to deliver patient results.

NPEx and SBS share a mutual affinity for the connected approach towards improving testing and referral processes within the NHS and further afield. When discussing the partnership with Russell Wheatcroft, SBS's Director, he emphasised that 'the NPEx model presents a synergy between what we aim to do both in and out of the lab'. The collaboration will allow SBS, through the client base they share with NPEx, to speed up the process by which they receive referrals and return results. Russell said: 'Both SBS and our customers could see the benefit of working with NPEx to find a solution that would meet the needs of the Cellular Pathology reporting process'.

SBS are receiving more work than ever. The global increase in aging populations means more people are living longer which comes hand-in-hand with a rise in diseases like cancer.

Combined with an aging workforce in labs, as fewer students decide to choose pathology careers and replace those at retirement age, there are less staff to meet the increasing workloads arriving at labs. NPEX's electronic delivery method reduces the man-power needed for the return of results and enables lab staff to spend time testing. Russell explained: 'Aging populations are a huge issue for the NHS and are at the forefront of demands on the pathology departments in their hospitals and communities. Our relationship with NPEX puts the fast delivery of results at its core. This has the ripple effect of speeding up how long it takes for patients to receive good news or receive treatment. It is imperative in both cases to reduce anxiety and save people's lives.'

NPEX and SBS's relationship holds many business benefits too. Russell said: 'The collaboration between ourselves and NPEX provides an opportunity for us to present our services to a new audience who might benefit from our expertise with the added advantage of this improved transfer pathway and faster return rate.' NPEX too is offered opportunities from this partnership. SBS's extensive, streamlined courier network works across many international borders which opens up a new market of customers who, like the NHS and UK private labs, could profit from the enhanced referral and return process offered by NPEX.

Both NPEX and SBS have integrated and committed teams who are willing to rise to the challenges presented by the archaic Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) still used by some labs. Russell stated: 'as a business SBS have always invested in our team to make sure we have staff on site who understand the

IT needs of our business and our clients. We have a technical group here who have worked with NPEX on a BETA project with a Scottish hospital. This project allowed both our teams to understand these challenges and prove their strong communicative skills. There will be some quick wins from the large number of NHS sites with updated LIMS. Even with archaic systems, the BETA collaboration proved to us all that we can still improve on the current service they receive which means that we are all striving for improvement.'

SBS has an unparalleled combination of expertise in histopathology and cytology which, coupled with the latest molecular diagnostics, places them in a unique position to support the growing need for specialist diagnostic services. They provide schemes for immunohistochemistry (IHC); immunocytochemistry (ICC); in situ hybridisation (ISH); circulating tumour cell (CTC) enumeration; and an extensive portfolio of targeted gene mutation analysis all under ISO15189:20120 accreditation. This is an exciting opportunity for NPEX, SBS and both our customer bases alike. Russell concluded: 'I think that progression will be relatively swift which benefits the NHS to deliver results fast and to patients who can move to treatment earlier, saving lives. I'm very excited about the future.'

Steve Box, the Business Development Director at X-Lab, said: 'Our collaboration with SBS presents an impressive opportunity for both parties. Not only will we be able to open up our solution to wider audiences, both in and out of the lab, but it offers a unique business opening for NPEX to reach new markets. I look forward to see how our partnership with SBS can promote NPEX's growth and success.'

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3

# THIS Spotlight: Debbie Hunter, Head of Service



Hayley Milsom (left) and Debbie Hunter (right)

Debbie Hunter is the star of our THIS Spotlight this quarter. Having recently changed role from The Health Informatics Service's (THIS) Service Account Manager to Head of Service, she has seen NPE grow rapidly over the last few years and has played a key role in its successful delivery.

Speaking about her transition within THIS, Debbie explained that: 'Although my new role commenced at the beginning of January, it has been essential to have a transition period, this has allowed me to work with a colleague to ensure a smooth handover process for two of my larger accounts. It is still early days in

terms of the transition into my new role as Head of Service. When I took on the role of Service Account Manager in 2015, we had 35 NPE customers, compared to the 105 customers now signed up to NPE which means we need a more dedicated Head of Service role. In order to retain existing business and develop new business my role is to ensure that high quality services are delivered in accordance with the NPE commissioner contract and that evidence of this exists to provide assurance to both the customer and Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust (CHFT), THIS's host, that all contractual obligations are being met.'

Debbie plays an active role in the X-Lab and THIS partnership behind NPEX. She explained: 'I am a single point of contact on behalf of THIS and CHFT for the commissioners of NPEX. Having this dedicated role will allow a responsive and proactive service when addressing any issues or concerns. NPEX has a robust governance structure in place: this includes an NPEX Management Board with representation from THIS and X-Lab and other smaller groups that feed into this. I represent THIS at these meetings and liaise with the relevant THIS managers to ensure that lessons are learnt, good practice is shared and the requirements of the customers, that are reflected in the contracts, are delivered.'

Her engagement with NPEX is not just with internal strategy, Debbie's role extends to NPEX's engagement with its users. She said: 'This is an exciting time for NPEX, as we are involved in several national initiatives. From working with Genomics England and NHS England, to getting all of Scotland's 14

Health Boards connected to NPEX, the solution is growing more than ever. With over 70% of NPEX sites either live or in deployment, there are still pockets of the country for our team to target.'

'Marketing NPEX is a crucial component in the success of the service. Working closely with various colleagues at X-Lab, we agree our marketing plan for the year ahead. Events, such as roadshows and the annual national NPEX User Group are fundamental to engage with all our stakeholders, whilst providing networking opportunities across the pathology community. Our 2019/20 marketing plan will involve these locations in NPEX Roadshows and continue our successful events for existing and prospective customers. Collaborative and inclusive communication are at the heart of NPEX, for example we have recently engaged with two large Acute Trusts in Yorkshire to discuss how we can optimise their use of NPEX by adding more tests to the system.'

We wish Debbie all the best in her new role and will support her as she takes on this crucial and exciting responsibility.



Steve Box (left), Debbie Hunter (centre) and Hayley Milsom (right)

# 4

## Tech Update - Email Notifications

While using NPEx, users will receive various notifications. Notifications provide information to the user detailing a wide range of system events. These could be messaging errors, shipment errors and specimen related events triggered through the user interface. The notifications a user receives depend on the subscriptions assigned to a user's role.

We are excited to announce that you can now receive your notifications via email. Until now notifications were only visible in the NPEx user interface. If you want to utilise this feature you can turn it on per user in the "Edit User Details" section of the configuration website.

**Edit details for Test User**

**User details**

Email	test.user@xlab.uk
Username	
Name	Test User
Phone	0113 226 5505
Enable Email Notifications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save	

If you are interested in receiving email notifications, please turn it on and let us know what you think via the NPEx Forum.

# 5

## NPEx New Features

We are always working on new features to improve our service and ensure it serves all our users' needs. Join our quarterly WebEx sessions and the NPEx User Forum to have your say.

### New features deployed:

- When initially setting up NPEx, the person creating the new account used to be given a password which they would have to reset. Now, users can email us and we send them a temporary password which enhances security.
- When editing shipments, the audit trail is now visible for any users to see that a shipment has been edited.
- On the 'Order' page, ordered tests will now be ordered by local orderable names.

- On the 'Edit Lab' page, labs can choose to prepend any results with the appropriate test name.
- Test system websites now have a banner which indicates that you are in the test system.

### Features in development and discussion:

- All of the proposed new features in development and discussion can be found in the 'Feature Proposals' tab on the NPEx User Forum.

## 6

# NPEX's Disaster Recovery System



The NPEX Disaster Recovery System (NPEX DR) is a secondary complete instance of NPEX. Located in a data centre at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, labs can connect to Huddersfield if NPEX's primary site, at Calderdale Royal Infirmary, is subject to a major disaster. NPEX's DR is enabled by a separate VPN connection between labs that use NPEX and the Huddersfield DR site.

This safety net for NPEX enables business continuity. In the event of a major disaster at the Primary NPEX site, the NPEX team would take the necessary steps to fail over the NPEX system to the DR system. Customers who have opted to connect with the DR system would then be able to continue using the service for the duration of the primary outage.

To enable connectivity with the NPEX DR solution, there is a requirement to set up and support a secondary, dormant VPN tunnel between the DR solution and the customer's laboratory system. Eventually, this will become

an optional stage in the NPEX deployment process. Some labs may face the challenge of being unable to change their outbound communication IP without a change request submitted to their LIMS suppliers. However, with some perseverance, labs will have access to this crucial feature of NPEX.

We are currently looking for labs to volunteer to pilot the solution to prove that it not only works but to ensure that all communication patterns, HL7 and FTP, will work with NPEX DR. This requires users to set up the new VPN connection and receive associated support overhead. Users wanting to take part in this scheme will be required to change their LIMS communication IP address through LIMS configuration and use HL7 messaging for their NPEX requesting and reporting.

If your lab meets these criteria and can commit the staff resources required of this testing phase, please email [npex@x-labsystems.co.uk](mailto:npex@x-labsystems.co.uk).

## 7

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### NPEx New Connections

- Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
  - The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust
  - Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
  - Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
  - Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
  - Source BioScience
  - Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust
- 

### NPEx - Go Live

- Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust
  - Frontier Pathology NHS Partnership
    - Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
    - Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
  - South West London Pathology at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
  - Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
  - The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
- 

### UK NEQAS – Go Live

We are pleased to welcome more users onto our UK NEQAS scheme that enables labs to more easily perform EQA testing and guarantee error-free accreditation.

- Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust
-

# 8

## The Team

This April we say goodbye to a key member of the NPEx team: Chris Dunne. Chris is the Assistant Director of Informatics at The Health Informatics Service (THIS) and, in his roles as Service Account Manager and General Manager, has worked on NPEx and its delivery since 2010.

We spoke with Chris about his time on the NPEx team and how he has watched the solution grow.

‘NPEx has gone from strength to strength in my time on the team – from the number of customers and number of staff to its governance and position in the market. The recent STP/ICS funding demonstrates the commitment NHS Improvement and NHS England have to the solution and its work at scale. This type of backing is testament to the hard work of the NPEx team and the resilience of NPEx itself to continue its growth across the UK and its capacity to capture markets further afield.’

Chris too has developed in his time working on NPEx: ‘Seeing the solution grow so successfully throughout the UK has been such an achievement. I am really proud to have played a part in the growth of NPEx and its success. The accomplishment of the latest User Group was proof to the hard work all the team have put in to develop a national solution that operates under a unique NHS/SME governance model.’

Chris is not just leaving a job but a team of individuals who make the solution and its delivery so effective. He explained: ‘I will really miss working with such an enthusiastic and

committed team who are not only passionate about what they do and the people they serve but also their dedication to each other.’

‘As I leave THIS, I leave with the knowledge that NPEx is presented with endless opportunities for development and expansion of the solution itself and across its markets. I hope to see NPEx internationally recognised soon and wholeheartedly believe its team can achieve this.’

We want to thank Chris for all his hard work, commitment to travelling and humour over the last nine years. Good luck in your next venture from everyone on the NPEx team.

In the interim, Mandy Griffin, THIS’ Managing Director, will be acting in Chris’ place.

