

Frequently Asked Questions

PACS Re provisioning Programme

Version 4.0 11/12/2023



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1.1 What is the PACS?

The Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) is a key clinical component in the delivery of care and diagnosis in NHSScotland. First installed in 2006, the same PACS system is used across the whole of Scotland.

PACS has completely replaced the use of film for radiology imaging and is in widespread use across all acute hospital sites. Locally, PACS allows imaging to be accessed anywhere in the hospital without the need to manually transfer film whilst also allowing concurrent viewing of the same image in multiple locations. The National PACS archive has advanced clinical care, providing clinicians with the full imaging history of a patient from any one of 15 Health Boards in Scotland (14 territorial NHS Boards and NHS Golden Jubilee) and is now relied upon by clinicians in every part of the hospital. PACS is used by approximately 40,000 users in Scotland.

1.2 Who is the current PACS Supplier?

The current Supplier of the Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) is Philips (formerly Carestream). This contract has been in place since 11 April 2006.

1.3 When does the current PACS contract expire?

The current National PACS contract and the 16 Access Agreements (15 NHS Boards and one for the Breast Screening PACS service) expire on 31 December 2026.

1.4 Who is managing the PACS Reprovisioning Programme?

In April 2020, the Scottish Government Digital Health and Care Directorate commissioned NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) to carry out the PACS (Picture Archiving and Communications System) Reprovisioning Programme. A PACS Reprovisioning Programme Team is managing the day-to-day programme activities. This team reports to the PACS Reprovisioning Programme Board.

1.5 Why do we need to run a new procurement for PACS?

The existing PACS contract has been extended as far as possible and there is now a legal requirement to carry out a procurement exercise. The “Once for Scotland” national PACS system we have at present is a success and is to be commended. It delivers huge benefits to patients, service users and the wider NHS clinical services. It is therefore vital that we maintain the sustainability of the service and avoid any degradation to the functionality of the system. This procurement will provide significant opportunities for improvement in terms of alignment with national strategy and other ongoing work in Radiology in Scotland.

1.6 What are the objectives of the PACS Reprovisioning Programme?

To establish a national contractual arrangement that is sustainable and can evolve over time at a pace that is acceptable to the NHS in Scotland, helping to achieve a more effective and joined up Imaging environment that supports changes to the clinical workflows required to implement the new Scotland Radiology Model.

The new contract for the PACS Service will aim to:

- Build upon the existing national PACS and ensure that existing functionality is provided as a minimum.
- Provide a modern, secure PACS system which will support the evolving models of care.
- Support the Scottish Government’s Digital Health and Care Strategy.
- Enable evolving Scottish Government strategies related to integration, digital imaging, radiology transformation and person-centred care.

1.7 What are the timescales of the PACS Reprovisioning Programme?

The Programme has been split into three phases. **Phase One – Pre-Procurement** to deliver the Outline Business Case and the Requirements Specification and prepare contract and procurement documentation. **Phase Two - Procurement** involves running a competitive procurement process to put new contractual arrangements in place with the winning supplier. Both of these Phases are now complete.

Phase Three – Transition and Implementation will cover implementation and training of the new national PACS.

The indicative **timescales** for delivery of the programme are as follows:

Phase One Pre-Procurement (April 2020 – December 2021):

- September 2020 - Formal Governance in place and Programme Initiation Complete
- December 2020 – Initial Agreement Approved
- September 2021 – Outcome Based Specification Complete
- January 2022 - Outline Business Case Approved

Phase Two Procurement (January 2022 – December 2023):

- January 2022 – Procurement Advert Issued
- October 2023 – Final Business Case Approved
- December 2023 – Contract Award

Phase Three Transition and Implementation (December 2023 – December 2026):

- Detail to follow

1.8 What is an Initial Agreement?

The Initial Agreement (IA) is the first of three documents which are required to be prepared as part of the Scottish Capital Investment Manual (SCIM) business case process. The purpose of the IA is to clearly demonstrate a good strategic fit between the programme being proposed and NHSScotland's Strategic Priorities and national policies. It should also make clear what constitutes a successful outcome and the expected benefits to be gained, as well as identifying any potential risks and explaining the financial and resource provisions required.

Once the IA is approved, work then progresses on the Outline Business Case (OBC) and then the Full Business Case (FBC).

1.9 What is an Outline Business Case?

An Outline Business Case (OBC) is the justification for the programme. It explains the likely costs, benefits and the strategic context and identifies the risks associated with the programme. It is essentially the blueprint for an investment decision. In the case of the PACS Reprovisioning, it is the document that will provide the justification to proceed to procurement.

1.10 What is an Outcome Based Specification?

An Outcome Based Specification is a document that defines all the clinical and technical requirements for the new contractual arrangements. It must be well developed and concise to ensure quality and performance of the new PACS contract/s.

1.11 What other programmes and initiatives are being taken into account as part of the requirement setting process?

Other National Programmes that may have interdependencies with the PACS Reprovisioning Programme include the **Scottish Radiology Transformation**

Programme (SRTP), Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) Programme, the National Screening Programme, and the iCaird Programme.

1.12 What is an IT Managed Service?

An IT Managed Service is an information technology (IT) task provided by a third-party contractor. In a managed service arrangement, the managed service provider retains responsibility for the functionality of the IT service and equipment, and the customer (in this case NHSScotland) pays a regular fee for receipt of the service.

An IT Managed Service comes with a Service Level Agreement (SLA), which is the contract between the service provider and the customer. The SLA identifies what services the provider will furnish and how successful delivery of services will be measured.

1.13 What will be better about the new contractual arrangements?

The new IT contractual arrangements will be more flexible and adaptable to evolving Scottish needs and new models of care, whilst ensuring that there is increased contractual rigour, tighter service levels and better collaboration with the system supplier. The new contractual arrangements are intended to enable us to change more rapidly in the future.

1.14 What will the duration of the new contract be?

The new PACS contract duration will be 10 years, with the option of two additional three-year extensions.

1.15 How are stakeholders being engaged in the Programme?

A detailed stakeholder engagement and communications plan has been put in place to identify all stakeholders and agree how best to engage with them.

The PACS Re provisioning Programme Board has been set up to represent the interests of the clinical, business and technical stakeholders affected by the Programme.

A number of requirements validation workshops took place in the early stages of the programme, which included a mixture of stakeholders including radiologists, radiographers and other clinical system users, Health Board PACS and Breast Screening PACS Managers, and IT subject matter experts (SMEs). The Bid Evaluation panels were also made up of over 30 PACS SMEs across the clinical, technical and business disciplines.

Where ever possible, the programme team gathers knowledge and insight from, and presents at, existing stakeholder forums such as the PACS Managers Group, the Scottish Diagnostic Radiology Managers Group, the Scottish Radiology Transformation Programme meetings, the Imaging Executive Board and Diagnostics in Scotland Strategic Group, eHealth and Information Governance and Security meetings.

1.16 Will the scope of this procurement include the Radiology Information System (RIS) as well as PACS?

The PACS Re provisioning Programme does not have a mandate to include RIS in its scope. PACS and RIS are different systems and have different suppliers in the marketplace, although some PACS suppliers do also have a RIS offering.

The inclusion of RIS would have a significant impact on the timeline, resources and cost of this Programme. It would introduce the risk of the procurement not being concluded in time for the expiration of the current PACS contract.

A RIS is key to the day-to-day work of a radiology department, the functionality is complex and there needs to be a full understanding of which aspects of a RIS would be better placed to operate nationally and which would be best to remain local. Standardisation and the rationalisation of both processes and the IT systems in operation within the NHS in Scotland is undoubtedly the target model, as set out in the Scottish Government Digital Health and Care Strategy. The PACS Reprovisioning Programme absolutely supports this “Once for Scotland” approach and has submitted an SBAR in relation to the need for a clear strategy and roadmap for the RIS in Scotland to the Scottish Government Digital Health and Care Directorate for their consideration.

1.17 Why is clinical service transformation not included in the scope of the PACS Reprovisioning Programme?

Until recently, service transformation was being looked at within the scope of the Scottish Radiology Transformation Programme (SRTP), as part of their Radiology Vision and Future Target Operating Model project. This work has been happening in parallel to the PACS Reprovisioning Programme and we have had close contact with their work. The requirements specification for the new PACS included future transformation related requirements that were known about at the point of going to Advert (January 2022), any subsequent changes on the Radiology Roadmap will now be addressed via change control in the new PACS contract.

1.18 Are we moving to a Cloud based PACS with a Vendor Neutral Archive and Non-Dicom images?

Yes, the new PACS will have Public Cloud Hybrid Hosting, consisting of a fully resilient Cloud datacentre, with additional local BC/DR solutions for added resilience in each Health Board. It will also include a Vendor Neutral Archive (VNA) and the capability to store non-DICOM imaging.

1.19 Will the new system requirements specify clinical coding standards - namely SNOMED CT and NICIP?

The new PACS requirements will take input from the Scottish Radiology Transformation Programme’s future Target Operating Model and the Digital Health and Care Strategy for Scotland, with the aim of future proofing them as much as possible. The requirements will specify the known clinical coding requirements at the point of going to Advert (January 2022).

The generation of examination codes is a functionality which resides in the RIS. The capability of the PACS to map DICOM fields to present data in a uniform manner has been specified in the new system requirements, but coding in the source RIS systems would have to be standardised across all Health Boards, in order to improve the quality of data across Scotland.

1.20 Will specialties such as Oncology and Radiotherapy be in scope?

Not at the outset, no. However, there is flexibility in the contractual arrangements to allow the option to procure other specialty services such as Radiotherapy, Cardiology and Oncology at a future point in time. This would be subject to development of the necessary access criteria (any system connected to the new PACs would have to have a RIS interface), appropriate patient identification and validation methods and an approved and fully funded business case (including ongoing support) being in place for that specialty. NHSScotland may decide not to use this contractual option due to the proposed development of a Scottish Media Repository. The forecast date for this to be operational is not yet known.

1.21 Who is the new PACS supplier for Scotland?

Sectra Ltd will be the new PACS supplier for Scotland. Founded in Sweden in 1978 by a team of researchers at Linköping University, Sectra (SECure TRANsmission) began with a data security solution for banks. Sectra has more than 1,000 employees in 14 countries and over 2,000 installations in 60 countries around the world. In the UK, Sectra has over 110 staff, working in four offices (Stevenage, Ipswich, Mansfield and Belfast), with plans to set up an additional office in Scotland. Sectra PACS is live in 120 sites around the UK, with that number set to rise over the next 10 years.

Awarded Best in KLAS for the highest customer satisfaction over the last 10 consecutive years, Sectra is a known market leader for PACS and will be the Prime Supplier for NHSScotland, delivering a full Managed Technical Service (MTS) for the Acute and Breast Screening PACS Service, including National PACS Based Reporting capability, through a Public Cloud hybrid architecture.

1.22 Where else is Sectra PACS in use?

Sectra PACS is in use at over 2,000 sites in 60 countries around the world. In the UK, Sectra PACS is currently live in 120 sites, with recent major UK implementations in Northern Ireland (NIPACS) and the Greater Manchester Consortium.