



Health
Pathology

NSW Health Pathology Information Guide

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
NSW

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1. Introduction

NSW Health Pathology (NSWHP) is committed to ensuring that members of the public can access its information easily and at the lowest reasonable cost in support of the broad objective of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act).

Agency Information Guides (AIG) play an important role in promoting access to information, supporting participation and contributing to Open Government. NSWHP's information guide details who we are, what we do and how members of the public, community organisations, the media and government agencies can interact with us.

This AIG is published in accordance with section 20 of the GIPA Act and provides a mechanism to make government information accessible, promote currency of information and appropriate release, and support the management of government information as a strategic asset.

The purpose of this AIG is to provide general information on the:

- structure and functions of NSWHP
- ways in which the functions of NSWHP, including the decision-making functions, affect members of the public
- specific arrangements in place to enable members of the public to participate in the formulation of NSWHP policy and the exercise of NSWHP functions
- kinds of government information held by NSWHP
- manner in which NSWHP makes government information publicly available.

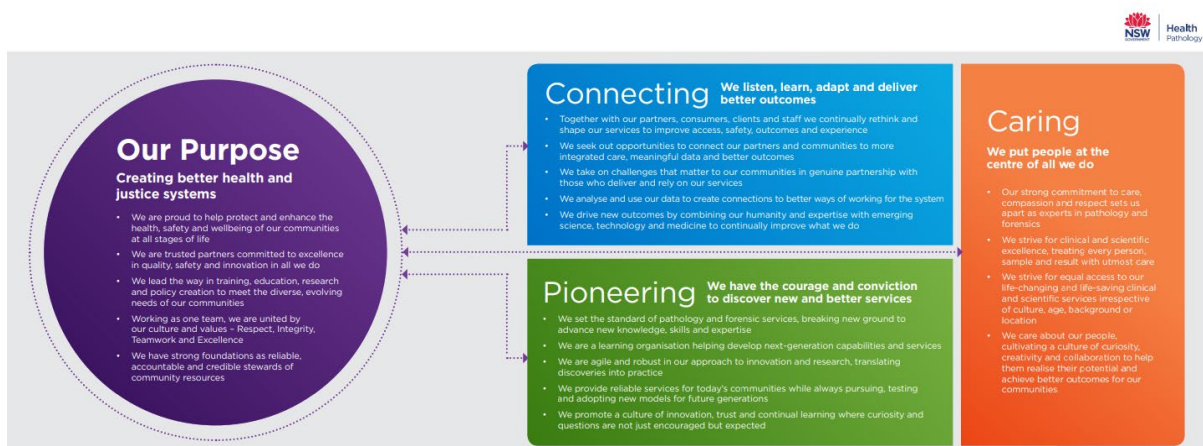
Where appropriate, links have been provided to other documents or webpages throughout the AIG.

This AIG is reviewed at least every 12 months and is available from NSWHP's website.

2. About NSW Health Pathology

2.1 Who we are

NSWHP was established in 2012 as an administrative unit of the Health Administration Corporation under section 9 of the *Health Administration Act 1982 (NSW)*, to provide specialist pathology and forensic and analytical science services to the NSW Health and justice systems.



2.2 Some stats about NSWHP

- We're proud to be Australia's largest public pathology and forensic & analytical science service, employing more than 5,000 staff.
- We perform over 100,000 clinical and scientific investigations each day across our 60 laboratories and 150-plus collection centres.
- We also play a critical role in research and public health, including the state-wide and global response to COVID-19.

2.3 What we do

NSWHP's functions are set out in its Instrument of Establishment. Its functions include:

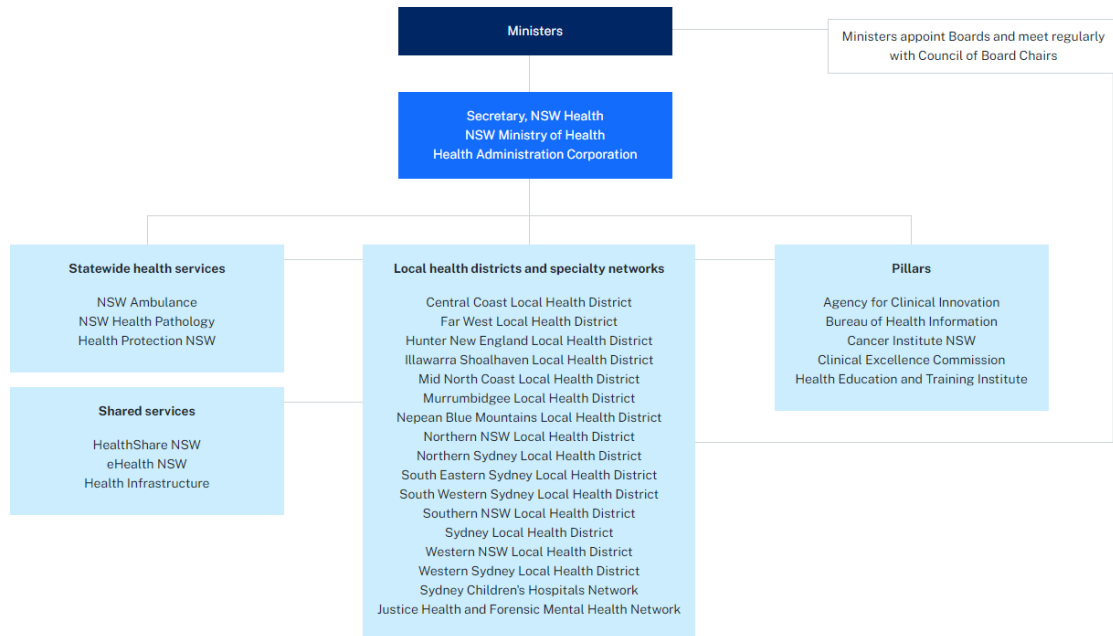
- Operating on behalf of the Health Secretary as the preferred provider and commissioner of pathology, forensic and analytical science services for the NSW Health system, with the responsibility to:
 - a. Deliver better health and justice systems through an integrated whole of state model of service
 - b. Develop and implement rigorous clinical and corporate governance frameworks that provide sustainable, responsive, efficient, high quality pathology, forensic and analytical science services.
 - c. Operate services with transparency and clear accountabilities, ensuring that organisation performance and financial management meet the requirements of the Health Secretary
 - d. Provide teaching and training and undertake research and development relevant to the provision of pathology, forensic and analytical science services
 - e. Build strong relationships with NSW Health agencies, the Department of Family and Community Services and Justice, NSW Police and other key stakeholders and contribute to the achievement of NSW Government priorities.

NSWHP performs its functions in accordance with a Statement of Service it enters into with the NSW Health Secretary each year. The current Statement of Service is available [here](#).

2.4 Where we fit

NSWHP is part of the broader NSW Health cluster which comprises of the NSW Ministry of Health, Local Health Districts, specialty networks, statutory health corporations, state-wide health services and shared support services, and affiliated health organisations. For the purposes of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* each NSW Health agency is a separate agency. If you are seeking access to information you must first identify the specific NSW Health agency that is most likely to hold the information that is that you seek.

NSW Health organisation chart



For further information on the wider NSW Health structure see <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/about/nswhealth/Pages/structure.aspx>. NSW Health's Agency Information Guide is available here <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/gipaa/Pages/information-guide.aspx>.

2.5 Our Structure

NSWHP is focused on:

- Building closer, more responsive relationships with our customers
- Ensuring state-wide strategies are more quickly and effectively implemented through a new operations model and stronger governance
- Putting a stronger focus on the needs of regional and rural services
- A state-wide service with a clear purpose of creating better health and justice systems.

The NSWHP organisation chart can be viewed [here](#).

2.5 Leadership Positions

Our Executive enacts the strategy and vision of NSW Health Pathology, under the guidance and direction of the Board.

Read more about our [Strategic Leadership Team](#).

2.6 Our Governance

NSWHP is committed to delivering efficient, effective and transparent services for the people of NSW. We have established important structures, systems, processes and behaviours to help us achieve this in an open, accountable and ethical way.

Our Board and Chief Executive

Our Board oversees the [strategic direction](#) and performance of NSW Health Pathology and ensures that good governance is in place. It includes senior representation from the Ministry of Health and other Health agencies, and independent members with extensive private and public sector experience. Specific functions of the NSW Health Pathology Board are detailed in its [Instrument of Constitution](#).

The NSW Health Pathology Chief Executive is responsible for the corporate governance practices of NSW Health Pathology, which are detailed in our annual [Corporate Governance Attestation Statement](#).

Together, the Board and Chief Executive play an important role in guiding the delivery of our services. They help enhance the experience of patients and drive greater value for the NSW Health and justice systems including:

- ensuring clinical and corporate governance frameworks are in place
- overseeing our overall strategic direction
- monitoring financial and service delivery performance
- maintaining high standards of professional and ethical conduct
- involving stakeholders in decisions that affect them, and
- establishing sound audit and risk management practices.

Board subcommittees

Our Board subcommittees provide advice and support to the Board in relation to key functions and strategies. The current subcommittees (including links to their Charters) are:

- [Audit and Risk Management Committee](#)
- [Finance and Performance Committee](#)

- Quality and Clinical Safety Committee
- Medical and Dental Appointments Advisory Committee
- Clinical Council

In addition, the Chief Executive has established a Medical Staff Council to provide advice to the Chief Executive and Board on medical matters relating to our services.

The minutes of NSWHP Board Meetings can be found here
<https://pathology.health.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-governance/board-minutes>

Further information on NSWHP's governance processes can be found [here](#).

3. How NSWHP engages with the public

3.1 Public participation

NSWHP is committed to promoting public participation and establishing arrangements that support members of the public to participate in the delivery of public pathology services.

NSWHP recognises the importance of public involvement in service delivery. Engaging with and maintaining public participation ensures that the needs and expectations of the public are considered in the business of government and can deliver meaningful improvement in service delivery.

NSWHP engages members of the community, and partnering organisations and stakeholders, in a range of ways to ensure we continue to put the patient at the heart of everything we do.

Engaging and involving consumers and carers in healthcare design ensures services match consumer and carer needs more closely and can offer greater comfort, safety and convenience.

These insights help us see the care we provide from different perspectives and contribute ideas for how we can improve care, innovate services and deliver experiences and outcomes that matter to people. This approach aligns with the NSW Ministry of Health's 'Elevating the Human Experience' movement.

We engage directly with the public in a range of ways, to obtain meaningful input on how we establish and run new and existing services that deliver the best possible care to the community.

When considering any consultation, we take into consideration what it is asking, why it is asking it, and who it wants to ask. This informs which channel/s will be used.

Depending on the level of community or stakeholder input required, NSWHP may use one, or a combination, of engagement methods including, but not limited to:

- Publication of information on the NSW Health Pathology website and/or Social Media Channels (Inform)
- Information sessions (Inform)
- Newsletters (inform)
- Email updates (inform)
- Surveys, including Service NSW's [Have Your Say](#) website (consult)
- Focus groups (consult)
- 1-on-1 interviews (consult)
- Workshops/User Groups (involve)
- Advisory Committees (collaborate)

3.2 Engagement channels

NSWHP engages with the public regularly through a number of digital channels, to provide a fast and easy way for the public to engage, seek assistance and provide feedback.

When considering any consultation with members of the public, NSWHP takes into consideration what channel will best suit the engagement. NSWHP uses its website, social media and other communication channels to let people know about NSWHP activities. Some of these channels include:

NSWHP website

The NSWHP website is used to provide access to the public to published resources and information regarding NSWHP's services and functions, policies, strategic plans, news, media releases and research activities. Members of the public can use the [Contact Us](#) section of the website to get in touch and provide feedback on its activities and functions. The website can be accessed at <https://www.pathology.health.nsw.gov.au/>.

Social Media

- NSWHP's Our Twitter account [<https://twitter.com/NSWHPPathology>] is used primarily to both inform and connect with our target audience of industry partners, collaborators, researchers and influencers in the health and space. It also reaches general public. NSWHP uses Twitter to share and promote our services, latest news on publications, consultations, campaigns, events as well as collaborations, career opportunities, staff profiles and good news

stories. Anyone can join the conversation and NSWHP aims to respond to comments, if appropriate. Given the character limitation on Twitter, NSWHP may request enquirers contact it directly via other channels, such as email or ask for your contact phone number, to better direct and respond to enquiries and comments.

- NSWHP's Facebook account [<https://www.facebook.com/NSWHealthPathology>] is used to share information to members of the public on our public pathology services and raise awareness of our services, partnerships, events, and celebrate achievements. Members of the public are able to send direct messages via Facebook, however NSWHP may request enquirers contact it directly via other channels, such as email or ask for your contact phone number, to better direct and respond to enquiries and comments.
- NSWHP's LinkedIn account [<https://www.linkedin.com/company/nsw-health-pathology/>] is used to promote and encourage connection with NSWHP by other organisations, agencies, industry leaders and the general public. Where possible, this channel is used to advertise career opportunities, NSWHP achievements and staff profiles.
- NSWHP's YouTube account [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGiBD8cD2IBy_7EEcdaENCw] hosts public facing video content to the general public. It encourages engagement through sharing and liking of promotional, educational pathology and forensic recruitment videos.

Open Government and Open Data

A key priority of the NSW Digital Strategy is a commitment to Open Government. The strategy outlines how data is open, collected and shared in a digital format wherever possible. Data should be made available to the people of NSW in a format that can be readily used, while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of those to whom the data relates. As the digital economy continues to grow in NSW, government agencies are looking at ways to open up the data they hold for use and application by industry, the community and the research sector in line with exclusionary and de-identification guidelines.

Open data is an important aspect of Open Government that provides the public with access to information in a variety of formats. Increasing the amount of government data that is available improves transparency and accountability within government, supports evidence-based policy development and provides a platform for innovation.

NSW Health publishes some of its data and publications to:

OpenGov NSW

OpenGov NSW is a website that allows NSW Government agencies to make information available to the public including annual reports and open access information released under the GIPA Act. NSW Health utilises this channel to publish annual reports to the public.

Data.nsw.gov.au

This government website allows NSW Government agencies to make data sets and information available to the public. NSW Health utilises this website to publish some datasets to the public such as media releases from NSW Health, etc.

3.3 Feedback and complaints

NSWHP welcomes input and feedback from the public regarding its services. NSWHP has a variety of channels for the receipt of feedback and complaints including via the NSWHP website, emails, letters, phone calls and social media.

Members of the public are encouraged to provide feedback on NSWHP services and publications. This feedback is important to NSWHP and assists in informing its strategies and publications and improving our services.

All feedback and complaints are dealt with confidentially and personal information is managed in accordance with the privacy protection principles in the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*. Further information about how NSWHP handles personal information is available in NSW Health's Privacy Management Plan and the NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information.

Further guidance on providing feedback in relation to NSWHP's services is available on our website here. Feedback in relation to this Agency Information Guide can be provided using the contact details contained in section 5.

4. How to access NSWHP's information

4.1 What kind of Government Information do we have

In the interests of openness and transparency, NSWHP makes information about our services as freely available to the community as possible. NSWHP publishes a wide variety of pathology-related information on our website

<https://www.pathology.health.nsw.gov.au/>. This includes our strategic plans, reports, Board minutes, policies, research, news and media releases.

NSW Health maintains a comprehensive website on wider NSW Health services and health matters including information on the health workforce, hospitals and other health services, publications and projects. The website can be accessed here <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/>

A wide range of NSW Health policy documents are published by the NSW Ministry of Health through its Policy Distribution System which can be accessed here <https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/Pages/pdslanding.aspx>. The public can also access NSWHP-specific policy documents here <https://www.pathology.health.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-policies>.

NSWHP is required to keep a register of government contracts. The register records information about each contract that has a value of \$150,000 or more. Details of NSWHP's contracts are available at the NSW eTendering website www.tenders.nsw.gov.au

Compass is the official magazine of NSW Health Pathology. It showcases innovations happening across our organisation, highlights progress against key initiatives and introduces you to the people behind the services we provide. Access to current and past editions can be found here <https://pathology.health.nsw.gov.au/newsroom/publications/compass-magazine>

4.2 Accessing NSWHP Information

There are a number of ways you can request information that's not already publicly available. This includes via informal and formal requests under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act).

The GIPA Act creates rights to information that are designed to meet community expectations of more open and transparent government, and encourages government agencies to proactively release government information.

4.3 How to access other NSWHP information

First search our website to see if this information is already available. If it is not, please email NSWPATH-GIPA@health.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 4920 4000 and ask for this information.

We will then determine if the information you want:

- is open access information that is readily available. If it is, we will tell you where and how you can get this information,
- will be made available as part of a proactive release of information,
- can be disclosed to you through informal release, for example, where no third party personal information is involved,
- requires a formal access application, for example because consultation with a third party is required.

Open access information

Under the GIPA Act all NSW agencies are required to make a range of open access information publicly available, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information. Open access information is to be publicly available free of charge on the agency's website.

In accordance with this requirement NSWHP publishes some information which is classified as open access information on its website such as:

[NSWHP Strategic Plan Towards 2025](#)

[NSWHP Clinical Services Plan](#)

[NSWHP Future Directions in Pathology Services](#)

[NSWHP Policies](#)

[NSWHP Board Meeting Minutes](#)

[NSWHP Test Catalogue](#)

[NSWHP Point of Care Testing](#)

[NSWHP Newsroom](#)

[NSWHP *Compass* Magazine](#)

[NSWHP Research Publications](#)

[NSWHP Research Activity Reports](#)

[Register of Government Contracts](#)

[NSWHP 2021/22 Privacy Annual Report](#)

[NSWHP 2020/21 GIPA Operations Annual Report](#)

Proactive release

The GIPA Act encourages NSWHP to release as much information as possible, in an appropriate way, free of charge or at the lowest reasonable cost. As part of the annual review of the AIG, a review of what other NSWHP information that can be pro-actively released is also undertaken as part of that review. To find out more, email us via NSWPATH-GIPA@health.nsw.gov.au or by phone (02) 4920 4000.

Informal request

A request may be made at any time for other information held by NSWHP. While we reserve the right to require a formal access application be made, we will generally provide the following types of information in response to informal applications:

- Documents that have already been made public,
- Documents containing personal information about the individual requesting the information,
- Copies of correspondence sent by the person requesting the information,
- Other reasonable requests for information which would not raise any potential concerns in terms of public interest considerations against disclosure.

Such requests would not require a formal access application or fee, though may incur administration charges, such as for photocopying.

Formal Application for access

If you haven't been able to get the information you need in any other way, you can formally request specific information from us in writing by completing a [GIPA application form](#), accompanied by a \$30 application fee and proof of identity. Applications may attract processing charges.

For more information, please contact the NSWHP Release of Information Officer by phone +61 2 4920 4000, email to NSWPATH-GIPA@health.nsw.gov.au or by writing to us at:

Right to Information Officer
NSW Health Pathology
PO Box 846
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

4.4 Excluded information and information not disclosed

The GIPA Act prescribes that some information held by an agency is considered excluded information. This means there is a conclusive presumption against the release of this information. Some information also may not be released due to an overriding public interest against disclosure pursuant to the GIPA Act.

4.5 Disclosure log

NSWHP maintains a disclosure log under section 25 of the GIPA Act which documents the information it releases in response to access applications, and that may be of interest to members of the public. The disclosure log provides a mechanism to further proactively release information to the public.

A regular review of NSWHP's disclosure log provides a valuable opportunity to analyse data collected from across NSWHP on requests for information and to identify trends and documents that could be released proactively. This allows NSWHP to update this AIG to reflect the released information. Increased disclosure of information from the disclosure log allows citizens greater opportunity to participate in policy formulation and service delivery, and identifies trends and documents that could be released proactively.

4.6 How to access pathology test results

Patients are legally entitled to a copy of their pathology test results. The treating doctor who requested the test is in the best position to understand and interpret the test results and what it means for their patient. If patients would like a copy of their test results, they should be requested from their doctor in the first instance.

However, as patients are legally entitled to a copy of their pathology test results for an examination performed on their behalf by NSWHP our [Release of Pathology Test Results Policy](#) outlines how a patient may obtain a copy of their test result under the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)*.

There are charges that NSWHP can impose in relation to requests for patient clinical records which can be found here in the *NSW Health Records and Medical/Clinical*

Reports – Rates Information Bulletin IB20190-036 – see
https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/IB2019_036.pdf.

4.7 NSWHP's Right to Information Officer
NSWHP's Right to Information Officer can be contacted using the details in section 5.

5. Feedback and questions

If you have any feedback or any questions in relation to NSWHP's Agency Information Guide you can contact NSWHP's Right to Information Officer in the following ways:

Street address

Level 5, 45 Watt Street
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Postal address

PO Box 846
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Phone: (02) 4920 4000

Email: NSWPATH_GIPA@health.nsw.gov.au

6. Version History

The approval and amendment history for this document must be listed in the following table.

Version No	Effective Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Procedure Author	Risk Rating	Sections Modified
1.0	25/01/2022	Director Corporate Governance	25/01/2022	Privacy, Right to Information and Records Officer	Low	New document