

LabTests OnlineUK

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Our history, redevelopment and impact

Owned and managed by



Collaboration and funding by



The Lab Tests Online UK Board

LabTests
OnlineUK

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History of Lab Tests Online

- **2001 The US beginnings** – The AACCC launched a US Lab Tests Online website
- **The ACB recognises the opportunity** - Funding secured from the Health Foundation and the Department of Health (England) by the Association for Clinical Biochemistry (ACB) now Association of Laboratory Medicine (LabMed)
- **2004 Lab Tests Online UK website launched at DOH by Minister of Health**
- **2021 Independence from the US Licence**
- **2026 Relaunch with new design**

‘Better do a **few** lab tests...’



*‘I could give you a copy of
your lab report but...’*

*...I doubt you’d understand
it.’*

Language confusing

FBC

LFT

TFT

IgE

Our mission hasn't changed

- **Mission from day one:** *'To improve the health of patients by increasing their understanding of laboratory tests.'* – Patient-centred and Non-commercial
- **What the site offered at launch**
 - Patient focused information in plain English on laboratory tests and conditions
 - Peer-reviewed and written by laboratory doctors and scientists volunteers
 - News on advances in laboratory testing and links to other useful resources
- **Governance from the start**
 - The *LTO UK* Board - **unpaid volunteers** from laboratory, medical professions who co-ordinate editorial, technical and marketing functions, and Lay reps.
 - *LTO UK* Board is a sub-committee of the Publications Committee of LabMed

Two decades of growth (2004–2024)

Leadership continuity: The *LTO-UK* Board has had three Chairs: founding Chair Mike Hallworth, Stephen Halloran MBE, and the current chair, since 2012, Dr. Danielle Freedman.

Funding stakeholders supplement the LabMed support

- 2007 The Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath) joined
- 2012 the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) joined
- Each contribute **£10,000 pa** in grants, plus **additional project support**

Growing editorial team: The editorial team is constantly growing to ensure that content targets are met with every page being reviewed within 3 years.

Editor's Choice:

A survey of Lab Tests Online-UK users: a key resource for patients to empower and help them understand their laboratory test results

R Leyland and DB Freedman

10.1177/0004563216631774

Volume: 53 issue: 6, page(s): 669-679

Article first published online: March 24, 2016; Issue published: November 1, 2016

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004563216631774>

Who uses the Lab Tests Online-UK website?

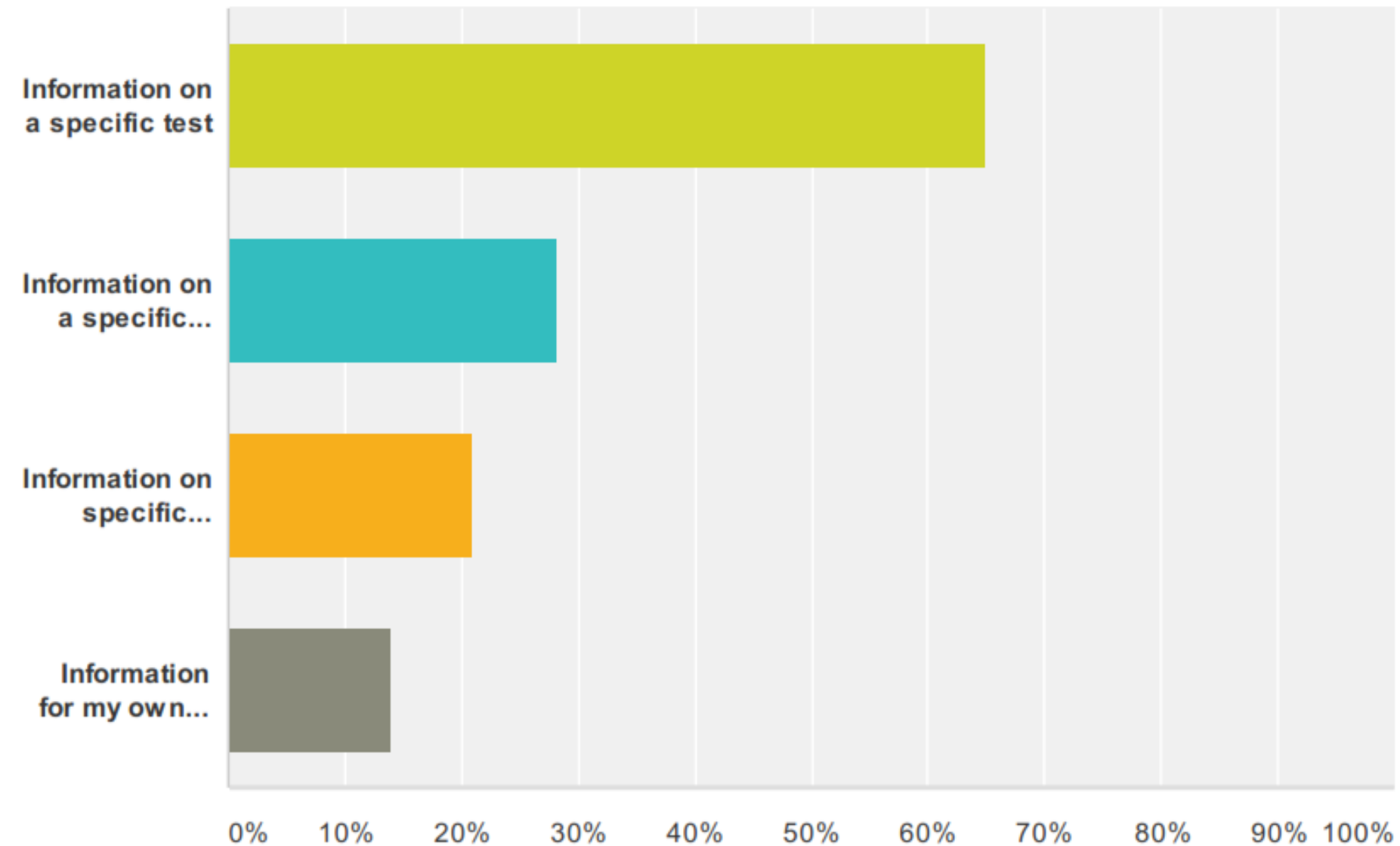
(Leyland and Freedman, Ann Clin Biochem Nov 2016)

- Patients, their carers and health care professionals

In our survey (661 responders):

- **40%** of respondents were healthcare professionals
- **60%** were patients or carers

Q 13. Which of these best describes what you are looking for today on this website?



- I have been told my white blood count is low
- Doctors lack of time/complacency etc
- Trying to understand what raised white blood cells means
- My wife desires to know what poisoned her. Current doctors are monitoring her recovery but are not finding the source

**Q16. You stated that you did not find what you were
looking for on the website (11%)**

Please could you state what was missing on the site

- I'm suffering from joint pain in my hands and feet and was wondering if this would be a consequence of taking statins over a period of years
- Wanted to find test results online
- Why I have high plate count
- What is a normal cholesterol
- I am suffering from a sewage leak over a year and want to test for ammonia inhalation if possible (local water board not repairing) and possibly other V.O.C.s Also any precautions or cures I need to take.
- Home testing for mercury
- Was looking to find out if HRT for menopause safe to take after radioiodine
- Testosterone cream for women

Summary / Key Findings

- 661 users responded but not all surveys were completed
- Liked / Loved website – right level of information / very useful
- **Patients WANT to see their lab results**
- Professionals like the information – right level
- Large number of users from outside the UK [Asia and America]
- Editorial comments: cluttered front page / font size
- Users unaware LTOL - UK Team are working **voluntarily**
- App rated 4.35/5

Some comments from users 2019-2021

- *Excellent site it's great to know why certain blood tests are being done*
- *That's very helpful thank you very much for your support, I really appreciate it. I will have more information to move forward with now!; And please pass on my gratitude to the editor who wrote such a comprehensive reply to my enquiry!*
- *I do find your information linked to from my on-line GP test results page helpful. Thank you.*
- *This site has been a God send for me. Simple and very easy to navigate as well as all the information I was looking for. Thank you 11/10*
- *Very interesting article which I found by accident whilst looking for something else! Your website is always my first port of call - many thanks - use of CRP potentially very useful in primary care settings.*

Independence: Breaking from the US licence

The original licence arrangement with the US, template based, constrictive

2020 the AACCC sold it's rights to LTO to a commercial organisation - a fundamental departure from the core philosophy of the UK site.

The decision to go independent

- December 2021 - The *LTO-UK* Board relinquish the licence from the US site
- *Lab Tests Online UK* name and existing content were retained
- Full independence passed to the Association for Laboratory Medicine

What *LTO UK* provides today

Patient centered content: Information about 300 laboratory tests in plain English

Peer-reviewed:

- Written and edited by laboratory professionals
- Three yearly content review cycle
- Rigorous editorial guidelines for editors
- Oversight by managing editor

Free, non-commercial, independent - Free to users, no adverts, no commercial sponsorship, editorial independence and **no AI generated content**.

Integrated - NHS App, TPP SystmOne, HealthFabric, DrDoctor, Welsh Specialist Virology Unit, UCLH OCS, Evergreen Life and Patient Knows Best.

Why the site needed redevelopment

The digital landscape has transformed - from desktop to smartphone

The NHS app partnership started in 2023

- Direct links to *LTO UK* pages within the NHS App from patients blood test results
- Dramatic and sustained increase in total traffic.

The existing site had reached its limits

- Complex navigation
- Site's purpose and ownership unclear
- Complex terminology was unexplained

Redevelopment phase 1: User research

Why research was commissioned, need to understand:

- who our users are, what they need
- where the site was falling short
- what opportunities existed to do more.

Professional user research through William Joseph-certified B Corp digital agency in health and charity digital services

Structured research programme

Phase 1- Sept 2024: content testing –does the existing site meet user needs (NHS patients)

Phase 2 - Jun 2025: user journey mapping to design a better-structured, more navigable site

User Research - Results

Perception of ownership & purpose

- **Unclear** who owned *LTO UK* site and if trustworthy
- **Unclear** *LTO UK* is an independent, NHS-aligned, non-commercial UK resource

Unclear site expectations

- Site's content and labelling led to user false expectations eg booking blood tests and personal results access
- Confusion and frustration when site can't do what they expect

Information overload

- Users found the volume and complexity of information on the site overwhelming
- Users unable to find what they need, intimidated by the volume of text

User Research - Results

Navigation & findability

- Content difficult to navigate
- Confusing and overwhelming
- Search box frequently used

Technical language barriers

- Users found medical and laboratory terminology that was not explained in plain English
- Acronyms used without being spelled out
- Clinical concepts using professional language was inaccessible to a general audience
- Users experienced frustration, anxiety and some abandoned the page entirely

Content users valued most

- The 'At a Glance' section- quick summary of what a test is, why it is done, how to prepare, and what the results mean
- Reference ranges(where appropriate) and result interpretation - patients want to contextualise their own results
- Consistent page layout - knowing where to look for information on one page made it easier to navigate another

User Research - Recommendations

- Remove news articles from the homepage
- Make the non-commercial, peer-reviewed status of the site more obvious
- Make the site's purpose and audience obvious on the homepage
- Make headings and subheadings clear and write in short sentences/paragraphs
- Use language that sets correct expectations of site purpose and direct users to GP/NHS App for personal results.
- Write for a lower reading age (WCAG readability guidelines) without sacrificing clinical accuracy, spell out acronyms on 1st use

User Research - Recommendations

- Use visual explainers, icons and diagrams to reduce reliance on dense text.
- Replace the mega-menu with a search on the homepage
- Prioritise developing a clear, optimised user journey for NHS App referral traffic.
- Ensure easy navigation to related content
- Always follow medical terms with a plain English explanation
- Consider adding a dedicated jargon buster or glossary section
- Prompts, summaries or printable formats for patient to take to GP- *'what to ask your GP'* prompts and printer-friendly page formats.

Phase 2 :User journey mapping

Workshop for Organisational stakeholders and user research: mapped the patient journey

- from awareness of a test to understanding and acting on their results
- 1. Awareness (*do I need a test?*); 2. Exploring Options (*can I get a test?*);
- 3. Making Decisions (*what to expect*); 4. Understanding Results (*NHS App referrals*); 5. Follow-Up (*what next?*)

Three primary user types:

1. **Health-Aware Individual**: influenced by media, seeking UK-specific information about self-testing or health optimisation
2. **NHS App Referral Patient**: received results and wants to understand
3. **Healthcare Professional**: patient-friendly info to share with patients

User journey mapping - outcome

'To be the *UK's most trusted guide to laboratory tests* and *empower* every person to confidently navigate their testing journey. Our *clear, trusted and accessible information* will connect with NHS pathways and meet users where they are — *helping them understand what tests are for*, how to access them, and *what results mean* — so they can take *informed action and feel supported* in managing their health.'

Strategic content pillars

Clarity and understanding → Plain English → Visual guides → summaries → What to ask your GP prompts	Trust and authority → Highlight NHS partnership → Non-commercial nature → Reduce confusion with commercial/US providers- (DTCTesting)	Guided journeys → Step by step guide from test to interpreting results → Integration with digital health platforms (NHS app) earlier in the journey	Accessible and inclusive → Highest accessibility standards incl content for different needs (low literacy) → Inclusive content design and language
Reduce misinformation and confusion about testing	Build public trust in <i>Lab Tests Online UK</i>	Support self-management and reduce pressure on GPs/services	Be recognised as a reliable information resource for patients

Simplified homepage

LabTests OnlineUK

LabTests
OnlineUK

About | 

Helping you understand the what, why and how of patient laboratory testing

Search for tests

Lab Tests Online UK is written by practising laboratory doctors and scientists to help you understand the many clinical laboratory tests that are used in diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of disease.

Search for the name of a test. Some tests are known by multiple names; for example, a full blood count is also known as an 'FBC'.

Improved search functionality

Search results



12 results found

[Cholesterol test](#)

This test measures the total level of cholesterol in your blood. Cholesterol is a fatty substance your body needs, but too much can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Also known as: Blood cholesterol; Total cholesterol; Serum cholesterol

[HDL Cholesterol Test](#)

The HDL cholesterol test measures the level of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol ("good" cholesterol) in the blood using a blood sample, usually taken from a vein in the arm by venepuncture. It is used to assess cardiovascular health and help determine the risk of conditions such as heart disease and stroke.

Also known as: HDL; HDL-C; "good" cholesterol

Easy to read

[Home](#) > [Tests](#) >

Full blood count (FBC)

Note: this site is for informational purposes only. To view test results or book a test, use the [NHS app](#) in England or contact your GP.

This test measures the numbers and types of cells in your blood, including red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. It's one of the most common blood tests and helps doctors check for conditions like anaemia, infections, and blood disorders.

Also known as FBC

Formal name Full blood count

On this page

- [Who needs this test](#)
- [Preparing for your test](#)
- [Understanding your results](#)
- [Questions to ask your doctor](#)
- [What happens next](#)
- [What can affect your results](#)
- [Other tests you might need](#)
- [About blood cells](#)
- [Other tests you might need](#)

Who needs this test

This is one of the most common blood tests. Your doctor may request it:

- as part of a routine health check
- if you feel generally unwell or tired
- if you have signs of infection (fever, chills, body aches)
- if you have unexplained bruising or bleeding
- if you have symptoms of anaemia (fatigue, weakness, pale skin, breathlessness)
- to monitor ongoing conditions like anaemia or blood disorders
- to check how treatment is working (for example, chemotherapy or medications that affect blood cells)
- before surgery or medical procedures

This test gives your doctor a broad picture of your general health and can help identify many different conditions.

Analytics & Impact

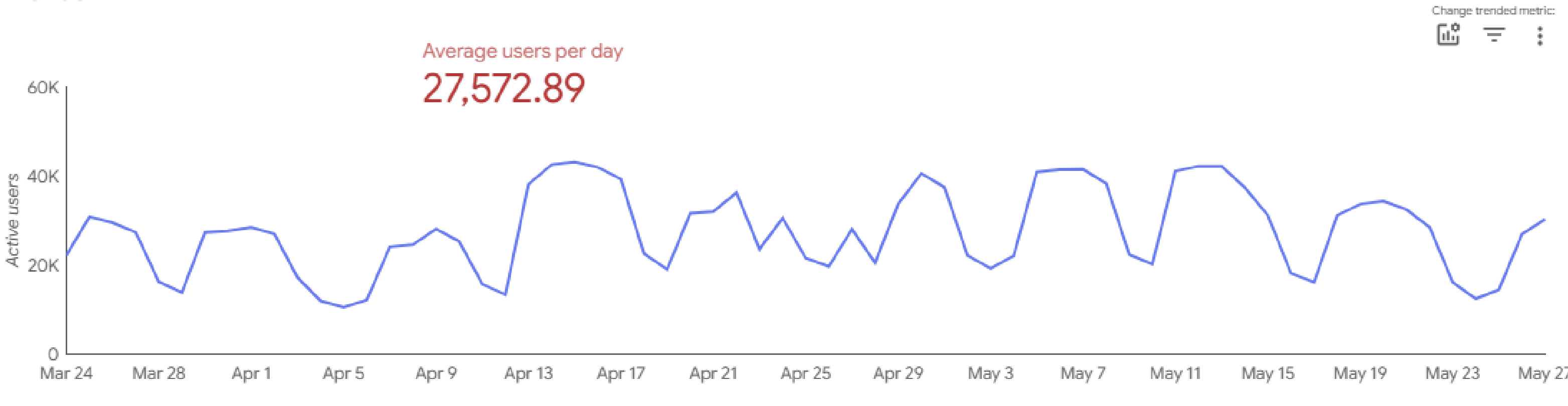
Measuring our reach and effectiveness

Traffic since launch March 2026

Summary

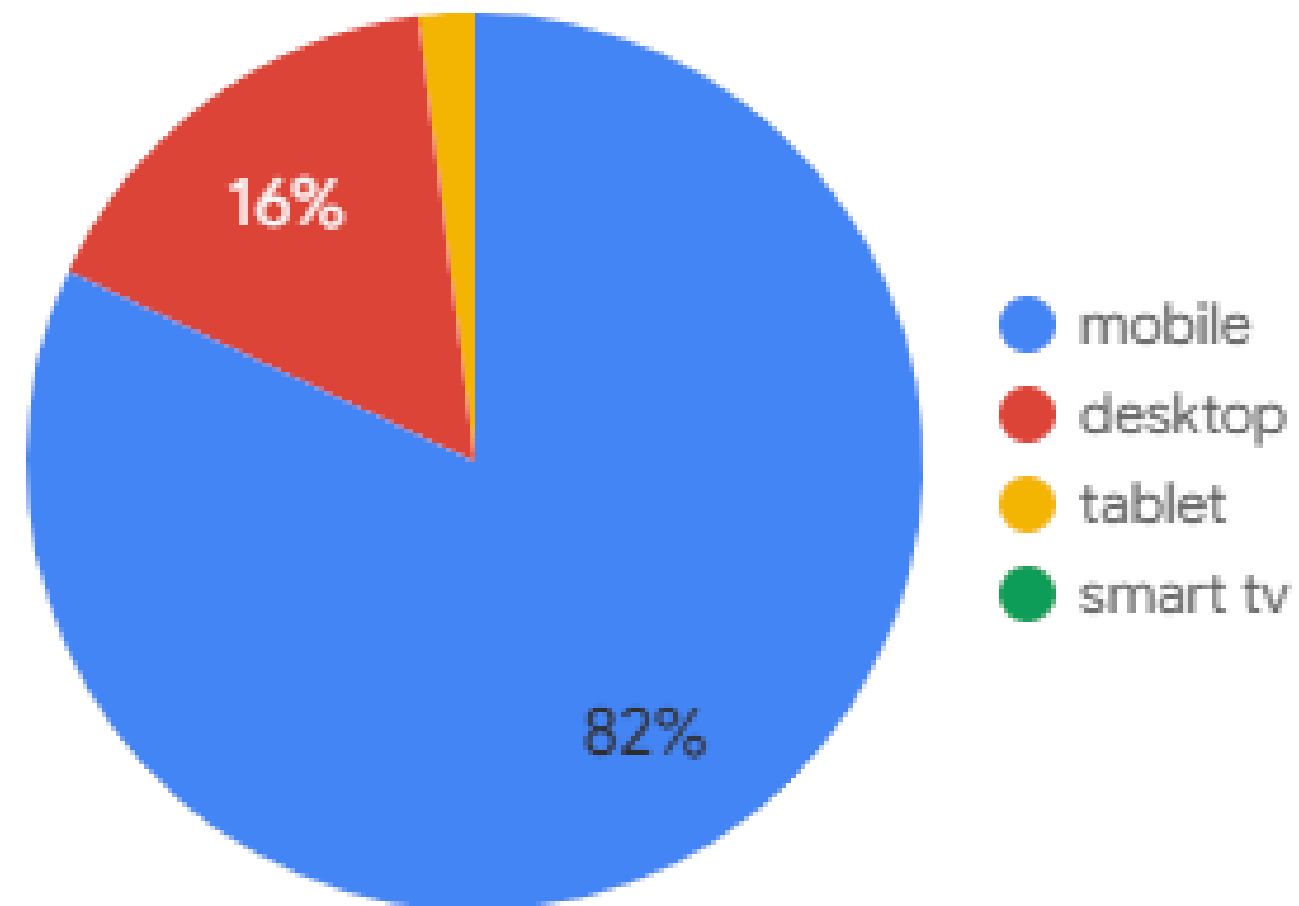
Active users	New users	New User %	Pct Engaged	Pageviews per User	Engagement Time
1.5M	1.3M	89%	47%	3.1	00:00:40
↑ N/A vs. Prev Period	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data

Trends

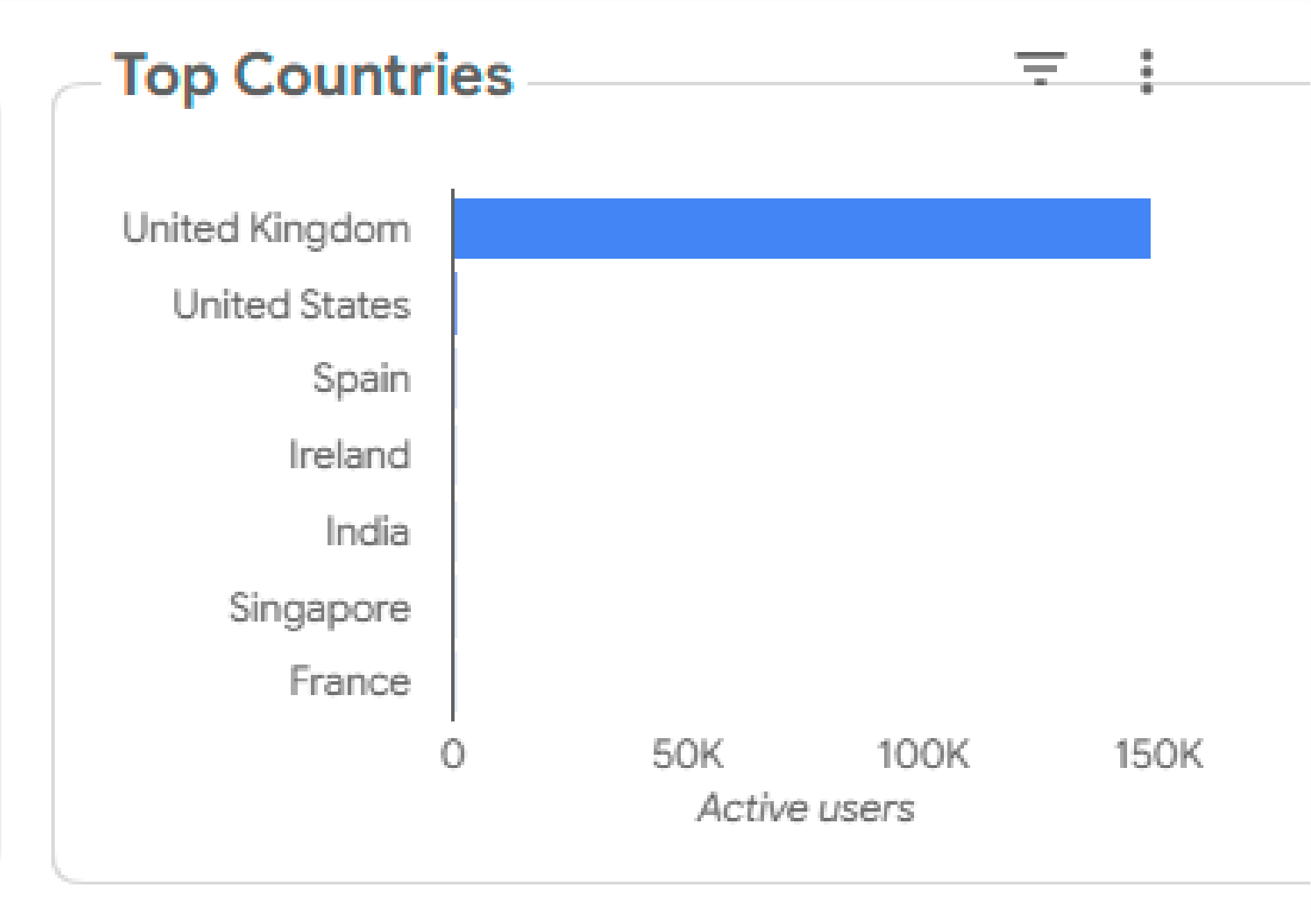


How people are reaching the site

Device Category



Global reach



1	United Kingdom	721,493 (96.69%)
2	United States	4,119 (0.55%)
3	Spain	2,426 (0.33%)
4	Ireland	1,188 (0.16%)
5	India	1,114 (0.15%)
6	France	1,091 (0.15%)
7	Egypt	1,078 (0.14%)
8	Netherlands	942 (0.13%)
9	Singapore	901 (0.12%)
10	Canada	756 (0.1%)

Where visitors are coming from:

The NHS app

Top Traffic Sources

Session source	Session medium	Sessions	% Sessions
(direct)	(none)	158,658	77.2%
my.patientsknowbest.com	referral	14,078	6.8%
systmonline.tpp-uk.com	referral	13,019	6.3%
(not set)	(not set)	11,218	5.5%
google	organic	8,264	4.0%
mychart.gstt.nhs.uk	referral	3,397	1.7%
mychart.kch.nhs.uk	referral	3,267	1.6%
nhs.uk	referral	2,528	1.2%
(data not available)	(data not available)	1,781	0.9%
mymedicalrecord.uhs.nhs.uk	referral	1,105	0.5%

The Top Ten visited pages of *LTO UK* – May 2026

White Blood Cell Count

HbA1c Test (254,186 hits)

Full blood count (FBC)

Red cell indices

Cholesterol test

Haemoglobin

Red Blood Cell Count

Platelet Count

PCV

Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone (TSH) (41,463)

Looking ahead

Scotland's Chief Scientific Officer

Newsletter June 2026

Lab Tests Online UK



The **Association for Laboratory Medicine** has relaunched Lab Tests Online UK, a major redevelopment of a patient information website that explains laboratory tests. Significant changes include a much simpler site architecture, designed to help users find the information they need quickly. The redevelopment was made possible through a partnership between LabMed, the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Royal College of Pathologists who jointly supported the investment required to rebuild the site, as well as providing expertise through LTO Board members and reviewers.

The future of *LTO UK*

A platform for the next 20 years

- Not simply a website refresh
- Strategic reinvestment designed to meet the demands of the next two decades
- NHS App integration, exponential traffic growth, clear evidence base from user research- awaiting “*Accessible Results study*” report (University of Bristol and funded by NIHR)

Operational sustainability

- The *LTO UK* Board is actively working to define and source funding to futureproof the site –subject to strict editorial independence

LTO UK is actively seeking reviewers to join the editorial team

Contact: [*enquiries@labmed.org.uk*](mailto:enquiries@labmed.org.uk).



"It's interpret-your-own-test-results day today."