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'To succeed, HQIP must communicate effectively with the wide range of people involved in healthcare quality improvement.'

A message from our Chairman

When the Department of Health decided that responsibility for the national clinical audit programme should move from the Healthcare Commission, it seemed obvious to me that its new home should be with the clinical professions working in partnership with patient organisations.

I was delighted that this view was shared by Dame Carol Black, Chairman of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, Peter Carter, General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing and David Pink, CEO of the Long-term Conditions Alliance. Their organisations came together as a consortium that, after a competitive tendering process, was awarded the contract to reinvigorate clinical audit in England.

The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership was set up in April 2008 with

a board comprising nominees from the partner organisations. Its remit is to manage and develop the programme of national clinical audit and to promote clinical audit in local services. I am delighted with the quality of staff that we have recruited so far to take on this work under the leadership of Robin Burgess, the Chief Executive.

To succeed, HQIP must communicate effectively with the wide range of people involved in healthcare quality improvement. This quarterly newsletter is an important vehicle for this and we hope that it will generate interest and stimulate you to become involved in our work. ■

Dr Paul Lelliott, Chairman

The new voice in healthcare quality

HQIP has been established to support and enable a culture of quality improvement throughout the health service.



'Quality is the touchstone of the health service, and HQIP is ideally placed to support the drive towards embedding quality in everything it does.'

From our base as a consortium of the Academy of Royal Medical Colleges, the Royal College of Nursing and the Long-term Conditions Alliance, we truly represent healthcare professionals and those organisations that act on behalf of patients and service users in order to improve outcome.

Standards of clinical care are best set by professional bodies working with patients and service users. Only in this way will quality measurement be the engine which drives improvement in practice. And only if healthcare professionals are at the centre will we generate the meaningful and complete information needed to make this a reality.

HQIP is a non-profit making organisation and is not a regulatory body: our goal is to help healthcare professionals measure

the quality of their work on behalf of the patients they serve.

At the outset, our focus will be on clinical audit but, over time, we will become involved in other areas of quality improvement. Quality is the touchstone of the health service, and HQIP is ideally placed to support the drive towards embedding quality in everything it does. HQIP has three core roles which give our immediate priorities, to:

- manage and develop the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP). The staff who managed this programme at the Healthcare Commission have moved across to HQIP to lead this work, ensuring continuity for the current national audit programme. Over time new audits will be added, and we will do our



best to ensure that the contracted audits enable participating local services to improve care as well as providing a national picture of practice.

- support and enable clinical audit staff in NHS trusts. As well as promoting involvement in the national audits, we will build competence, capacity and support for teams to run effective local audits that result in improved practice on the ground. To support this we will build the concept of audit as a profession, marked by validated training, set standards and defined, clear roles – all with a local, regional and national support structure. Central to this will be the creation and development of the National Clinical Audit Forum (NCAF) – an initiative which will bring people together by interest to share and exchange good practice and channel views to the centre.

- promote clinical audit to all healthcare professionals. We will explore, with the accrediting bodies for each area, how audit can be made a required and essential part of how professionals are accredited or revalidated, thus making participation in audit a requirement from commissioners and subject to effective scrutiny from regulators. HQIP's role is to ensure that audit is always present as a measure of service quality and contributes to achievement of improvement in outcomes. HQIP will work with professional organisations and the Department of Health as they define how new systems will operate, offering advice and guidance as to how participation in audit is assessed as part of accreditation and revalidation.

It's a challenging agenda and there is a lot to be done. HQIP is new and is still

'HQIP is new and is still recruiting. Over the next few months we will strive to be visible, communicating that we are here and that quality improvement matters.'

recruiting. Over the next few months we will strive to be visible, communicating that we are here and that quality improvement matters. We will form partnerships and effective alliances with many stakeholders and, above all, we will work collaboratively. We look forward to working with you all as we grow. ■

Robin Burgess, Chief Executive

A word about NCAAG

The establishment of the National Clinical Audit Advisory Group marks the creation of a voice for clinical audit in the Department of Health and at the centre of the NHS.

Unlike the two other core professional activities, education and research, clinical audit has lacked a national strategy and a coherent programme of activities. NCAAG will endeavour to meet that challenge by enhancing the existing programme of national clinical audits and seeking to support the many NHS staff involved in local audits in their own Trusts.

It will also seek to improve connections – between the centre and the periphery; between national clinical audits regardless of their source of funding; and between audit and IT developments, revalidation, and R&D.

To achieve these goals, the members of NCAAG reflect the diverse range of skills

and interests that are needed to understand the challenges and devise appropriate policies. However, the Group recognise that success will only be achieved by listening to and working with all those already engaged in clinical audit both locally and nationally. Together, clinical audit can be invigorated and enhanced so that it takes its rightful place at the centre of healthcare delivery and policy. ■

For more information about NCAAG, contact eve.riley@hqip.org.uk

Professor Nick Black, Chair



The National Clinical Audit programme

This is an exciting time for the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP). We have undertaken a review of the current audits and those that are progressing well have been invited to bid for further funding. For those we think could be improved, we have initiated a process whereby we help the key stakeholders redefine what they want to achieve from the audit.

We are proud to manage such a range of effective and professionally run audits that have already had an impact on patient care. Their development over time is testimony to the energy, commitment and imagination of healthcare staff in so many centres. We aim to create an environment which enables the teams managing national audits to develop their audits further. We will also actively promote and encourage participation by clinicians and services. In particular, we will work with the project teams to ensure that clinicians and services have better and faster access to the results of the audits.

We have received a number of suggestions for new topics for national audit. Funding

limitations mean that the number that can be added is fairly small and priorities will be set by NCAAG. Selection will take into account both Department of Health priorities and the viability of the audit topics proposed. There is a real desire to focus on patient involvement in collecting audit data and effective engagement with GPs: these will be two important criteria in the approval of new audits. Over the next few months watch out for news on how proposals for new audits will be formally invited, and the process by which they will be assessed.

Two other important national audits have been incorporated into HQIP's national programme - the Paediatric Intensive Care Audit Network (PICANet) which has its focus on children and the National Joint Registry (NJR), which is a brilliant and effective study of hip and knee joint surgery. It is a model of how professional organisations are working together to drive up standards and of how audit can be used to measure clinical performance. Over time, the Registry could be extended to cover both more joints and other areas in the UK. ■

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'We are proud to manage such a range of effective and professionally run audits that have already had an impact on patient care.'

LQIT Arrives

As part of our aim to support and enable a culture of quality improvement through the reinvigoration of audit, HQIP has appointed two key roles to its new local quality improvement team (LQIT).

Darren Thorne joins as the National Lead for Local Quality Improvement and brings with him almost 15 years of experience. He has an extensive background in both primary and secondary care at local, regional and national level and will provide day-to-day management of the quality improvement team and its activities - including the promotion of audit to local practitioners and the development of a library of resources for quality improvement.

Jabeen Haque joins as the Local Quality Improvement Facilitator from a background in quality facilitation within health and social care.

Their programme of work will focus on four key areas:

- to be the single point of contact within HQIP for staff in local healthcare organisations, including those with concerns about involvement in national clinical audit

- to provide support to enhance established clinical audit networks and to develop new networks where they do not exist
- to create a library of resources, including tools and guidance to help local teams deliver local audit activity
- to develop a national training and education strategy for clinical audit.

The team welcomes opportunities to meet with those leading established networks and to hear from people who are interested in setting up their own local or regional network. They are also looking to meet with Trusts who have developed or implemented local best practice or would like support with local clinical audit issues. ■

You can contact LQIT by emailing darren.thorne@hqip.org.uk or jabeen.haque@hqip.org.uk



Who's who

Robin Burgess, our Chief Executive, is new to audit but not to promoting quality improvement and best practice. Robin has spent almost all his career in the addictions field, and has been a practitioner, service manager, local commissioner, regional government regulator, national government policy maker and chief executive of regional and national charities.

HQIP is split into four teams, and is continuing to recruit and build up its new structure:

- A core central support team providing business and office management, financial management of projects and contractors and handling communications. The communications lead is Alison Percival, who brings a wealth of experience from the commercial sector, and who is developing our new website.
- A contracts and procurement team oversees the contracts process for all audit programmes, including NCAPOP, PICANet and the NJR. This is led by Helen Laing who has transferred from the Healthcare Commission, along with her colleague, Victor Ogunyemi.
- A local quality improvement team promotes clinical audit to practitioners and seeks to improve capacity, competence and effectiveness of audit at local level.
- A new development team, to be recruited, which will advance policy and strategy in the areas of new types of quality improvement, as well as lead on accreditation and revalidation and support the NJR. ■

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Date for your diary

Working together to reinvigorate local clinical audit

**Wednesday 29th April 2009 &
Thursday 30th April 2009
West Midlands**

To ensure local clinical audit professionals have a voice in the future of clinical audit, we will be holding a conference aimed at those who support and facilitate local activity. The conference will include keynote speakers, question and answer sessions and several interactive workshops, and is set to address the challenges and opportunities ahead - providing a

forum for discussion and advice on matters relating to clinical audit.

The cost will be £50 and one delegate per Trust will initially be invited – further details will be sent out later in the year.

Coming soon

HQIP are developing a new website which will become both a source of reference for healthcare professionals involved in clinical audit and quality improvement, and a resource for patients and the general public to evaluate the quality of their local provision.

The site will collate information on clinical audit, becoming a one-stop shop for local

practitioners, and future additions will include an online forum to encourage dissemination of good practice and provide a medium for communication between all healthcare professionals.

Key content will feature information on the national clinical audit programme, including data collection and report publication schedules, details about how to apply for national audit funding, a library of audit tools and resources for local clinical audit staff, examples and definitions of best practice and practical advice on other quality improvement initiatives. It will also publish timely news feeds so you can keep up to date with the latest in healthcare, details of our upcoming events and information on externally organised events and training.

Frontline survey update

Funded by the Department of Health, Frontline recently undertook a survey around the organisation, activities and priorities of local clinical audit teams. The survey is now complete and results will be published on the new HQIP website.

This has been an invaluable study of local views and will be used to influence HQIP's work programme over the coming months. We would like to thank all those who took part – we are very grateful for your views and your time.

See us at...

HQIP will be exhibiting at the following events over the next few months and welcome visitors to the stand:

Primary Care Live, London	30 September - 1 October 2008
Measuring & Monitoring Clinical Outcomes, London	14 October 2008
Commissioning for World Class Quality, London	11 November 2008
Primary Care Live, Manchester	18 - 19 November 2008
NICE Conference, Manchester	3 - 4 December 2008
Clinical Audit 2009, London	4 - 5 February 2009

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