

Clinical Audit vs. Service Evaluation

GP Clinical Pharmacists play a key role in undertaking clinical audits and service evaluations in primary care. This document outlines the key differences between service evaluations and clinical audits, the key components of each and relevant contractual requirements.

But why have we produced this document?

This document has been developed following CQC reports highlighting a lack of knowledge and understanding of clinical audits amongst staff, including Practice Pharmacists. This lack of knowledge has been identified during CQC inspections and emphasises the importance of Clinical Pharmacists being familiar with the differences between audits and service evaluations and being able to demonstrate this understanding during CQC inspections, as well as presenting audits undertaken in the practice.

	Service Evaluation	Clinical Audit
Definition	Designed to define what does service achieve and whether the service is effective	Identify whether a service meets the defined standard and the current level of care delivered for a specified condition
Outcome/aim	Designed to define current level of care	Designed to produce information to inform how to improve delivery of care to meet the defined standard (as part of quality improvement)
Measures	Measures current service without reference to a standard	Measures against a predefined standard
Cycle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and understand (define service and standards it is to achieve, identify stakeholders and evidence base) 2. Assess (is an evaluation the correct model to use? Why are we doing it?) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select a topic and agree on audit criteria (standards of best practice) 2. Collect and analyse data against audit criteria 3. Feedback results 4. Agree and implement changes

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For further support contact: Hollie Ryder (Primary Care Clinical Pharmacist Tutor), hollie.ryder2@nhs.net or Scott Downham (ICS Pharmacist Ambassador), scott.downham1@nhs.net

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Plan (purpose of evaluation, what resources are needed and approach to take) 4. Do (collect and analyse data) 5. Review and act (present, share and act on findings) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Allow time for changes to embed and then re-audit 6. Repeat collection and analysis of data 7. Review whether practice has improved
Data collection and analysis	Involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of existing data • Interviews • Questionnaires 	Involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of existing data • Interviews • Questionnaires
Review	Not required a part of evaluation cycle	Re-audit , in order to confirm whether changes implemented have improved quality of care/standards are now met
Locality	Both local/in-house level and nationwide	Both local/in-house level and nationwide audits
Clinical governance/contractual requirements	No CQC clinical governance requirements Service commissioners may require involvement in an evaluation	Evidence of clinical audits required as part of CQC clinical governance standards and inspections
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are patients with the service being provided? • Has this service been a success? • What does the service achieve? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish flu vaccine uptake and in what age groups • Are antibiotics prescribed in line with NICE guidelines? • Review whether patients on established combined hormonal contraception are followed up

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Hertfordshire and
West Essex Integrated
Care System

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