Royal College of Physicians

Benefits of accreditation

Why is accreditation the 'chosen' method for improvement?

Accreditation:

- is a supportive process that evaluates the quality of clinical services against a set of established standards
- provides independent and impartial recognition that a service demonstrates high quality
- is a quality assurance mechanism that will reassure patients and commissioners
- makes a positive impact on patient experience
- is a team commitment to improving the quality of care in a service.

Several of the accreditation programmes managed by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) are supported by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

"Accreditation is a powerful vehicle for improving care. We bring together clinicians and patients to agree and set evidence-based standards. Clinical teams and organisations can assess themselves against those standards and develop the evidence required to achieve those standards. This creates a whole approach and culture of continuous improvement.'

Dr John Dean
Former clinical vice president of the RCP

Improve efficiency

Accreditation:

- identifies potential improvements and aids the creation of effective action plans, which can provide support as services implement changes
- increases satisfaction with working conditions, leadership and collaboration
- enables services to focus on quality in a structured way around day-to-day care
- highlights issues that you want to be seen, and drives solutions.



North Bristol Hepatology team

"There is strong focus for the entire team on improving patient outcomes, audits, focusing on health inequality, improving patient experience and for service leads planning demand and capacity. The entire process has helped developed a strong leadership and forward planning within the team ... The team is empowered to look for opportunities to improve the service, involve patients in co-production and review patient feedback.'

Ealing Pulmonary Rehabilitation team

Consistency

- By following national standards, accreditation **reduces clinical variation** across services.
- This is a driver to ensure that all patients receive **high-quality care**.

"The standards of practice are clear and achievable. There is a comprehensive framework by which to assess the service and allow for service development; for example, we developed an overarching annual operating plan which allows a transparent summary of the service provided, and developed a patient focus group.'

Dr Ankur Srivastava
North Bristol NHS Trust



St Helens and Whiston Hospital Inpatient diabetes team

"Ongoing positive patient outcomes allows us to identify areas of improvement more rapidly and address these in a timely manner.'

BCHC Community Respiratory Service

Continuous improvement

- Standards ensure that services can demonstrate and celebrate their dedication to ongoing improvement.
- The accreditation process embeds quality improvement in everyday practice.
- Supported change improves service delivery and quality of care for patients.



Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust

“We were able to consciously review our service as a whole and take stock of existing processes we have in place. It was a great way for us to review our service; what we were doing well with and where we could improve as well as exploring new developments.’

Dr Hyder Hussaini
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust

Share good practice

- The RCP collaborates with services to highlight best practice.
- Services receive direct feedback from assessors, including congratulations on their successes.
- Accreditation provides an opportunity to build relationships with and draw from the examples of other accredited services.
- The accreditation process highlights where to focus improvement efforts.



RCP Accreditation Unit assessors

Raise service profile

- Accreditation provides a sense of pride for services in showing that they offer a well-led, patient-centred and safe service.
- Accreditation raises a service’s profile within its trust, which can often be used to leverage support in an organisation.
- Accredited departments can be more attractive to potential employees and trainees.
- Accreditation aids retention/development of existing staff.

“Our achievement was recognised throughout the trust, including our board of directors. We saw the process as a great team bonding experience, and a way to celebrate our achievements.’

Dr Janisha Patel
University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust



University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

“The entire journey to accreditation has been an excellent opportunity to assess and reflect on the service we provide to our patients, highlight good practice, identify areas for improvement as well as implement service development strategies.’

Dr Ankur Srivastava
North Bristol NHS Trust

“We believe that having accreditation is a key driver in specialist staff wishing to work in our department, as well as in retaining current staff ... the positive feedback from the assessors has kept team morale high, which ultimately benefits interactions with our patients.’

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust
Peninsula Specialist Immunology and Allergy Service

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